

***THE FAITH DIMENSION: A MIXED METHODS STUDY ABOUT SPIRITUALITY
AND RELIGION IN NEW ZEALAND YOUNG PEOPLE***

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ABSTRACT

Recent New Zealand demographic data has indicated a continuing trend towards secularisation in this country, with more individuals unaffiliated with any religious organisations than ever before. Nevertheless, approximately 49% of New Zealanders still identify with a Christian faith (including Catholic, traditional and non-traditional protestant denominations), and a growing minority (3.5%) identify with one of the other major religions (e.g., Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism; Statistics New Zealand, 2014). In spite of this large proportion of New Zealanders that profess some type of religious affiliation and a strong history of religious beliefs for both Māori and New Zealand Europeans, there has been very little research from New Zealand regarding the development of spirituality and religiosity in young people.

The aim of this study was to explore this question in a group of 87 religiously affiliated young people (aged 16-21) and a subsample of 12 interview participants through an embedded mixed methods study. The research questions examined the distinctions between “religiosity” and “spirituality”, the factors that young adults perceive as influencing the development of their faith identity and spirituality, and the associations between faith identity, religiosity and spirituality, religious motivation, social connectedness, demographic factors, and three indicators of mental health (psychological well-being, anxiety, and depression).

The quantitative analyses showed that faith identities characterised by higher diffusion (disengagement with faith) and moratorium (exploration/doubt) predicted lower spirituality and religiosity; whilst intrinsic reasons for church attendance predicted higher spirituality and religiosity. Levels of psychological well-being and anxiety were predicted by spirituality (but not religiosity), moratorium faith identity, and relational quality with parents and peers. The negative association between spirituality and anxiety was mediated by higher moratorium faith identity. Finally, symptoms of depression were only predicted by relational quality with parents and peers, and connectedness to community. The qualitative analyses revealed that spirituality and religiosity were considered to be different concepts, distinguished by associations with the individual and the institution respectively. The interview participants believed their spiritual development to be largely influenced by their parents and mentors, interacting with their church community and participating in church activities more frequently than just Sundays, as well as having a personal connection to God.

The results revealed contrasts between the two types of analyses, whereby higher questioning and exploration was associated with lower spirituality in the quantitative analyses, but in the interviews, the young people believed questioning faith to be a positive influence on spiritual development. These findings are discussed from the perspectives of identity development, stages of faith development, as well as in terms of the methodology of the study. Further, the associations between mental health and social connectedness add to the discussion whereby the impact of moratorium on spirituality and mental health may be influenced by the social environments and church settings in which young people practice their faith and spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. The Parameters of the Topic and Terminology

1.1. Why Psychology Should Consider the Faith Domain

In the history of Psychology, ideas about the essential domains of human development have evolved as the discipline has established itself as a science (Oser, Scarlett, & Bucher, 2006). As discussed by Oser, Scarlett and Bucher (2006), earlier theorists were exploring the hidden traits of humanity, and writing in depth about internal, cognitive processes, whilst the behaviourist movement changed much of this and brought the discipline into alignment with empirical scientific practice (Hill & Pargament et al. 2000). Currently, psychologists assent to the idea that human development incorporates physical, emotional and social changes throughout the lifespan (Erikson, 1968, Oser et al, 2006, Hill & Pargament, 2000). However, the existence and importance of humanity's spiritual dimension is controversial and often rejected by psychologists, sociologists, and those who adhere to an epistemological orientation of strict empiricism (Stark, 2000; Stark & Finke, 2000; Wulff, 1996). In cultures that have not been historically shaped by Western European perspectives of epistemology and ontology, there seems to be greater acceptance of a spiritual dimension that exists outside of (transcendence) or within (immanence) the physical world. For example, according to African metaphysics spirituality is a way of life, and a way of being in the world that acknowledges the divine as the life force which exists within all physical entities (Mazama, 2002). Similarly, the dimension of the ancestors is considered to exist in a parallel dimension to those who are physically alive. The dimensions of the living and the ancestors are separated only by the confines of human perception. In Latin-America, Christianity was the main religion of most of those who colonised America, therefore Latino spirituality is largely Catholic, and is often practiced in ways that reflect cultural values such as loyalty and empathy within all relationships, particularly with immediate family, and this extends to their conceptions of God, and the Virgin Mary (Campesino & Schwartz, 2006). Religion is integrated into family life, and according to Campesino and Schwartz (2006), often contributes to the influence of matriarchal leadership in the family. Mothers and grandmothers have dominant roles in their childrens' lives, and part of this influence is the passing on of their religious devotion. Hence, in cultures where secularisation is less

pervasive, religious and spiritual perspectives are not separated from other domains of life, but everything is interconnected. Spirituality is integral to ways of being and knowing.

Historically in New Zealand, Māori culture has valued wairuatanga (spirituality) which has emphasised that spirituality is an essential component to human well-being, and to ignore it upsets the balance of overall health and well-being in other domains (Durie, 1994). The importance of the spiritual dimension is an important aspect of Māori myth and culture, and forms a key component in Durie's (1994) widely cited model of 'wholeness' or well-being (te whare tapa whā) which gives expression to contemporary Māori understandings of wellness. In this model well-being is likened to a house, where the integrity of the structure relies on four walls. These four walls represent four dimensions of well-being: taha tinana (physical), taha hinengaro (psychological), taha whānau (family and relationships), and taha wairua (spiritual). Wairua is understood to be foundational and interconnected with the other facets of well-being. This incorporates the concepts of tapu (the sacred) and hau (breath, human life essence), belief in divine beings, a spiritual connection to the land, and the balance between energies (Durie, 1994, p70). Identity is also considered to be connected with wairua, and therapies which enhance and heal cultural identity are recommended in order to address individual and collective spiritual well-being (Durie, 2001; Rochford, 2004). For this reason the biomedical model of health which has dominated western health care systems and arose from secular western epistemology has been deemed by some as ineffective for indigenous populations (Rochford, 2004; Tse, Lloyd, Petchkovsky, & Manaia, 2005). Whilst the importance of humanity's spiritual dimension has been acknowledged in the public health sphere for Māori, there is perhaps much less recognition of its significance to the wider New Zealand population – even for those who profess a personal spirituality and a religious affiliation. Psychology has certainly tended to lack this recognition, and some have suggested that this may be because on average, psychologists are the least religious in many western nations, including within the scientific community (Hill et al., 2000; Stark & Finke, 2000). However, there is a growing body of literature in which it is recognised that engaging with a client's spiritual or religious worldview may be an important component to therapy and that ignoring this dimension may hinder the therapeutic alliance (Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2013; Tse et al., 2005).

Hill et al. (2000) paradoxically describe the psychology of religion and spirituality as a domain that is "sufficiently developed but still overlooked, if not bypassed, by the whole of psychology" (Hill et al., 2000, p51). Some have theorised that this domain is in recovery from an era in which the rise of empiricism and influence of the 'enlightenment' meant that a

pervasive negative view and disengagement with matters of faith and religion became the norm (Stark & Finke, 2000). Great thinkers, such as Peter Berger (1967) predicted that secularisation would become global, and that all religion would be eradicated by the turn of the century. This prediction did not come to pass. Berger's sociological perspective of religion was that it is an entirely socially constructed phenomenon, and therefore, subject to changes that reflect the changes in society (Berger, 1967). This has occurred to an extent, however, faith appears to be somewhat resilient to the movement of Western society towards secularism, and some have even called it 'universal' to the human condition (Hoge, 1996; Smith, 1979). While secularisation has not eroded the spheres of spirituality and religion as dramatically as predicted, it has certainly changed the climate of religion in many Western nations, and continues to do so. However, it is too simplistic to assume that religion is globally declining (Hoge, 1996; Stark & Finke, 2000; Wulff, 1996; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1999). Secularisation is not the only pattern that is emerging. It is occurring in conjunction with desecularisation, in which there has been exponential growth in certain religious groups, as well as pluralism, in which religion in the Western world has diversified beyond mainline Christian denominations (Hoge, 1996; Pargament, Magyar-Russell, & Murray-Swank, 2005). These processes can be seen in New Zealand, which has led to a vastly different religious climate today than what it was in the mid-twentieth century (Hoover, 2008).

1.2. The New Zealand Terrain

According to Griffiths (2011), New Zealand by constitution has never had an official state religion and is considered a secular nation. However, whilst some countries may strive to stifle all religious voices, Griffiths (2011) argues that New Zealand is secular in its tolerance of pluralism and the right of each individual to participate in any religious or spiritual worldview that they choose. Individual freedom is key, and religion is expected to be a private matter, not encouraged in public discourse or decision making (Bradstock, 2013). Hoover (2008) reports on the changes in religious affiliation in the New Zealand census between 1966 and 2006. The processes of secularisation, desecularisation and pluralism have vastly changed the patterns of religious affiliation, according to census data. Most prominent is secularisation, which can be seen in the general pattern that a higher percentage of people do not affiliate with any religion. In 1966 this figure was 10.86%, while in 2006 it was 34.6%. According to the latest census in 2013, this percentage is now at 41.9%. Hoover (2008) notes that it is not that the Christian population has declined, but rather, that the New

Zealand population as a whole has increased. The Christian population has remained at about 2 million since 1966. The age cohort in 2013 who were most likely to report no religion were young adults aged 20-24 with males being slightly less religious than females. Another interesting development is the slight drop in religiosity from those aged 15-19 to those aged 20-24 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Therefore, secularisation is perhaps most notable in the adolescent and young adult populations, suggesting that religiosity is being transferred from parents to youths at a lower rate than in previous decades. Pluralism is the trend towards greater religious diversity in the population. This trend is largely accredited to migration and greater ethnic diversity. Numbers of adherents to Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism and Hinduism rose dramatically in the twentieth century, and have also continued to rise between 2006 to 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). In terms of Christianity, in 1966 78.3% of New Zealanders identified as being Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or Methodist (Hoverd, 2008). Secularisation has meant that overall Christian affiliation has declined, and in 2013, 48.9% identified as Christian of some description. In contrast to 1966, the 2013 figure comprised of all denominations, including Māori, suggesting that within Christianity there is now a greater diversity of denomination. A diversity that reflects desecularisation. For example, whilst many of the main Christian denominations have experienced population decline, there has been a growth in the “Christian NFD” (not further defined) and “Protestant NFD” categories, including growth in evangelical and fundamentalist groups (Hoverd, 2008, Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Both denominations of Māori Christianity grew steadily between 1966 and 2006 (Statistics New Zealand provides data on the Rātana and Ringatū sects, however there are several other denominations of Māori Christianity in which the data were not presented). This growth appears to have plateaued according to 2013 data.

Hoverd (2008) explains that the decline in the four main denominations, represent the Christian population shifting their denominational affiliation as opposed to losing their religious affiliations altogether. For example, the growth in evangelical and conservative groups may be a result of those in Anglican, Methodist or Presbyterian members shifting to Pentecostal and evangelical churches. The increase in people who do not wish to define their denomination may in part be those of fundamentalist or evangelical groups who profess a distaste for religious categories (Hoverd, 2008). It may also indicate that denominational categories do not have the same meaning now as they did in previous generations. There is some evidence to suggest that particularly for young adults, denominational categories are more arbitrary compared to their parents’ and grandparents’ generations (Johnstone, 2013).

The public sphere of New Zealand has also become increasingly secular, with a view to keep religious voices outside of political decisions, debates, and public education (Bradstock, 2013). Some American researchers speculate that if young people are not exposed to religious discourse, they will not develop an understanding of it, or an appreciation for those who do (Denton, 2012; Smith & Denton, 2005). It may be that religion is lower among young adults because secularisation in public discourse, media, and education has had a greater socialising impact than their parents. Therefore, fewer young people adopt their parents' beliefs and affiliations. Similarly, it is possible that some young adults lose their religious affiliation in their early twenties due to entering environments where religious discourse is not welcome, thus creating a disconnect between their family and church environments with their work place or university. This disconnect may create a sense of cognitive dissonance, or a clash of identities. Johnstone (2013) suggests that one way that this tension is resolved is to gradually fade out of one setting, and commit to the other.

1.3. Mapping Where to Go: The Focus of this Study and the Following Chapters

If adolescents and emerging adults in New Zealand are adopting different religious and spiritual affiliations compared to older generations, it may be beneficial to discover more about the kinds of faith expressions that these young people ascribe to and what influences this development. If, as Smith and Denton (2005) suggest, young people are becoming increasingly disengaged with religion, they run the risk of lacking empathy for those who do ascribe to a spiritual or religious tradition, including the ability to access religious discourse. As Bradstock (2010) suggests, religious discourse is at a disadvantage in New Zealand because we have an aversion to value-laden arguments in the public sphere. However, this type of secular reasoning assumes that other forms of discourse are not value-laden. It also fails to take into account that due to pluralism, there is a greater minority of those with diverse religious worldviews. Therefore, avoidance of these worldviews may alienate a population who are already in danger of encountering implicit (and sometimes explicit) exploitation. Similarly, desecularisation has led to a greater number of people who ascribe to more conservative religious worldviews, which may seem even more alien to young people who are tacit believers in more dominant cultural ideologies (Smith, Christoffersen, Davidson, & Snell Herzog, 2011; Smith & Snell, 2009).

In light of the changing landscape of religion and spirituality in New Zealand, I have sought to understand some of the key issues regarding religion and spirituality in New Zealand young adults. This thesis is a report on a mixed methods study which investigated

spirituality and religiosity in a sample of young people living in New Zealand. The study had two overarching aims: from a developmental perspective, the first aim was to discover the predictors of religious and spiritual development in late adolescence to emerging adulthood. Second, from the perspective of well-being, this study was an investigation into the association of religiosity and spirituality to mental health.

The following four and a half chapters of this thesis provide an introduction to the topic of religion and spirituality in psychology, with the understanding that it is not a well-established field in New Zealand academia. Therefore, these introductory chapters are written with the intention of providing an overview of key topics, concepts and common challenges found in the literature. To begin with, the terms religion, spirituality and faith mean different things to different individuals, and their definitions also differ between research studies (Pargament et al., 2005; Selvam, 2013). Perhaps the most challenging aspect to this field is that of defining these terms and creating valid and reliable measures. The focus for the remainder of this chapter will be to discuss these definitional issues and clarify how these terms are to be conceptualised for the research at hand. The focus of chapter two is to introduce a developmental approach to understanding spirituality and religion, and will outline several key theories of faith development in the literature. These theories of development are ways to help explain the predictors and possible pathways towards identifying oneself as spiritual and religious. Following this, identity in relation to spirituality and religiosity in young adults will be discussed. This study has explored a variety of possible predictors, including a set of psychosocial covariates. Spiritual/religious identity will be explored within the context of socialisation as a key mechanism in faith development. The focus of the third chapter is that of well-being. Mental health and its relation to spirituality and religion will be presented according to empirical literature. Finally, chapter four will provide a more extensive rationale for this study and the research questions that I sought to address.

1.4. Finding and Defining Our Terms

Many writers have acknowledged that defining what is meant by the terms “religion” and “spirituality” is an exceedingly difficult task, and a field of enquiry in its own right (Ammerman, 2013; Emmons & Crumpler, 1999; Good & Willoughby, 2008; Krauss & Hood Jr, 2013; Oser et al., 2006; Pargament, 1999a, 1999b; Selvam, 2013; Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999; Vieten et al., 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Selvam (2013) writes that the one thing that researchers of this topic tend to agree on is that there is no agreement. Key thinkers in

this domain have devised many models and definitional theories, as such, the present study has required a balance between the meanings and definitions found in literature, history, and religious traditions, including the subjective, and individual uses and understandings of these concepts. Even if objective definitions were possible, they must accommodate for subjectivity. This is a topic in which individuals differ in their understandings. However, it is precisely its subjectivity (the understanding and experiences of each participant) that is of value and of which this study focuses on.

1.4.1. Spirituality and Religion: Separate or Similar?

Trends of secularisation and pluralism have impacted on how the definitions of religiosity and spirituality have recently changed. In much of the literature a common distinction is made between religion and spirituality. Spirituality is often understood to be an individual and personal response to the sacred, whilst religion refers to the institutional or communal aspects relating to the search for the sacred (Ammerman, 2013; Emmons & Crumpler, 1999; Gall, Malette, & Guirguis-Younger, 2011; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Pargament, 1999b; Selvam, 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Spirituality is often perceived to be about authentic, personal expression, whereas religion is judged as ritualistic and impersonal (Ammerman, 2013; Gall et al., 2011). Hence, religion is often viewed in a negative light, whilst spirituality is viewed more positively. This may reflect the Western shift towards secularism in the twentieth century, and an increase in popularity of the idea that spirituality can be unfettered from institutional constraints (Smith & Denton, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Historically, they were not considered as separate concepts, but rather, the term 'religion' (treated as the overarching term) covered aspects which are now associated with the term 'spirituality' (James, 1929; Pargament, 1999b; Selvam, 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

The relationship between these two concepts underwent a shift throughout the twentieth century, in response to processes such as secularisation, and the privatisation of religion (Pessi, 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Zinnbauer et al (1997) summarised this effect by noting that particularly for the baby-boom generation in the United States, religion began to hold negative connotations. In this generation, suspicion of authority (including religious authority) increased, as did the search for individual spiritual experiences apart from religious institutions. They further noted that whilst the term 'religion' used to refer both to personal experiences and corporate responses to the sacred, it is now more often used to reference only

the corporate and institutional aspects. This separation has seen the increase of people who define themselves as ‘spiritual’ but not ‘religious’.

William James (1929) penned a definition of religion that is quoted in much of the literature on this topic, “the feelings, acts, and experiences of men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine” (James, 1929, p32). This definition first appears to be similar to many of the current definitions of spirituality. However, James elaborates to say that religion has two spheres: the personal and the institutional. This echoes the common dichotomy between religion and spirituality that was mentioned above. However, for James, these separate ideas are aspects of one whole with the uniting factor being the relation to the divine (James, 1929).

Pargament (1996, 1999b) draws a similar formulation in defining spirituality and religion, and bases his theory on the proposition that these constructs should not be treated as separate entities, but as overlapping. He conceptualised religion to be the broader construct, whilst spirituality is at the heart of religion. The core to both, and the reason that they should not be considered separately is that both pertain to the sacred. Religion may deliver a sense of significance, or it may result in an encounter with the sacred. Pargament (1996) wrote that religion prescribes the “pathway” in the search for the sacred. It is the concrete actions, the ways of worship, the dogma, which are designed to lead to the sacred. Spirituality, on the other hand, is the orientation or disposition towards the sacred. Spirituality is the reason for undertaking the actions of religion and the worldview of a particular religion. (Pargament, 1996, 1999b). In light of this, spirituality and religion (in theory) could be considered to be one integrated construct that involves a core, authentic desire for the sacred coupled with a set pathway – often an institutional pathway – which one perceives will lead to encountering the sacred. Further, while it makes theoretical sense to see these two concepts as integrated, Pargament (1999b) gives a “yes and no” answer to the question of whether they are separate or related constructs. In practice, this definition also allows for the fact that many people are spiritually oriented in that they are engaged in a search for the sacred, but are not affiliated with religious pathways. Pargament (1999b) also points out that what is sacred differs between individuals and different religions. It may be that it is what one defines as sacred that will determine how different or similar one understands religion and spirituality to be. Therefore, it is not only the case that people differ in how spiritual and religious they are, but also in how they understand and practice the relation between the two.

James (1929) argued for the relation between the personal and institutional by explaining that religious traditions such as Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism arose as a

result of the authentic experiences of individuals with the divine. The essence of most religions is to encourage spiritual growth and experiences of the sacred within the framework of the symbols and systems of belief and practice. Stifoss-Hanssen (1999) stated that religion and spirituality are “in constant relation with each other” (p26). It may be that the use of two words (spirituality and religion) has caused this understanding to be lost, however, much of the literature supports the view that these concepts do most often occur together (Gall et al., 2011; Good, Willoughby, & Busseri, 2011; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). In fact, more can be learnt through tracing the relation between the terms, than by trying to produce static definitions. Although they can function as separate concepts, in practical terms, they often overlap, and usually co-occur (Oser et al, 2006, Watson, 2000, Good & Willoughby, 2008, Smith & Denton, 2005). Even for individuals who see themselves to be only spiritual, there will often be aspects in their descriptions that many researchers would label as having originated from a religious tradition (Ammerman, 2013; Gall et al., 2011; Hodge & McGrew, 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). For example, there are modern forms of Christianity in which being “religious” is discouraged in favour of personal experience with God, or a “relationship with Jesus Christ” (Ammerman, 2013). Yet clearly this assertion originates within a religious tradition – a modern form that is interpreting the meaning of ‘religion’ and utilising a specific definition. Ammerman (2013) also points out that many spiritual practices that claim to be purely individual and unaffiliated with any religion have historical roots in orthodox Christianity, various forms of Hinduism, Buddhism, or other Eastern religions.

The idea of non-religious spirituality has gained recognition in the twenty-first century. Whilst it has become a common phrase, its prevalence is not well established in the international literature (Ammerman, 2013; Smith & Snell, 2009). Ammerman (2013) found that the majority of her participants were, in practice, a combination of religious and spiritual, even if they claimed to be spiritual but not religious. She suggests that there is inadequate evidence to support the notion that those who claim to be spiritual but not religious are a growing category. Rather than providing evidence for the growth of a non-religious spiritual cohort, she argues that it is evidence for a growth in a social rhetoric. It may be a ‘moral’ or ‘political category’, where those who claim to be against religion are against a certain type of religion, or have an idea about the kinds of religious people they prefer not to be associated with (Ammerman, 2013). For this reason, it is difficult to ascertain the prevalence of people who practice spirituality outside of a particular religious tradition. Furthermore, some researchers have commented that there is very little empirical evidence to suggest that teenagers and young adults distinguish between religion and spirituality (DeHaan, Yonker, &

Affholter, 2011; Smith & Snell, 2009). According to Smith and Denton (2005) and Smith and Snell (2009), the majority of American adolescents and emerging adults whom they interviewed did not even comprehend that there could be a divide between religion and spirituality. One possibility for this is that they had not reflected on these issues in enough depth to have been able to reason about these terms. It may also relate to the increase of pluralism and secularisation. Whilst the baby-boomer cohort experienced the increase of scepticism about institutional religion, young people of generation Y and the Millennials were socialised to be tolerant and non-judgemental of personal differences (Johnstone, 2013). Denton (2012) suggests that this generation are now ill-equipped to reason about these matters, nor do they feel that it is valuable to do so.

There are many discrepancies in the literature of how religiosity and spirituality are defined, and as discussed above, the relationship between the terms – or the extent to which the concepts overlap or inform each other, also differs according to personal belief and practice (Pargament, 1999b, 2005). Such variation in opinions, understandings and terminology may evoke questions of why and how one would attempt to measure something that appears to be so difficult to conceptualise and appears to be subjective. It is important to ask such questions in light of the fact that religion and spirituality are concepts that are unique because (in most faith systems) they pertain to the sacred, or even the supernatural. Indeed, the validity of claims to the sacred can neither be credited nor discredited through the epistemology of science (Meissner, 1996). However, very few social scientists and students of religion now deny that it has a human component, and that the principles of social science and psychology can hope to access this (Stark & Finke, 2000; Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999). In most cases, it appears that most people behave towards religion and spirituality as rational agents; applying universal methods of decision-making, such as cost-benefit analysis (Stark & Finke, 2000). If it is true that people apply similar thought processes towards religion/spirituality as to other aspects of life, then it is possible to study the human response and behaviour towards religion and spirituality – to the extent that human response and behaviour towards anything can be studied. The same biases and challenges of studying any psychological phenomena also apply to assessing people's experiences with religion and spirituality.

1.4.2. Faith

While faith was not a specific focus of this study, it is beneficial to provide some discussion of it as a concept. This term was used along with 'spirituality' and 'religion' in

my measures as a way to generically refer to participants' beliefs and affiliations regarding the sacred. Also, some theorists of spiritual development, have used 'faith' as the term of choice, and argue that faith is a human universal (Fowler, 1981, 1984). The concept of faith is important in both religion and spirituality, and according to some theorists, may account for a large proportion of the overlap between them (Oser et al, 2006, Fowler, 1981). In contrast to Pargament's (1999b) proposition that the sacred is at the core of religion and spirituality, it could be argued that the common denominator is faith. The term "faith" is often misconstrued with "belief", and in western society these terms are usually used interchangeably (Fowler, 1984; Smith, 1979,). According to Smith (1979) belief means an intellectual assent to propositions. It is in keeping with western empiricism and critical enquiry in which one can stand back from a phenomenon or worldview in order to assess the truth value or trustworthiness. It also does not demand any form of practice, because beliefs can be intellectually held in absence of any particular behaviours. Smith (1979) argues that faith amounts to more than belief by calling for an alignment of one's identity and daily living with the object of faith. Most religions, other than modern Christianity, tend not to emphasise belief over practice. Christianity in the twentieth century became a religion of orthodoxy (believing correctly) over orthopraxy (behaving correctly) (Smith, 1979). However, Smith argues, that faith is largely universal in religion – even in an atheistic religion such as Buddhism, and is expressed in intellectual belief, religious practices, and ways of living that are oriented toward the sacred (and are not necessarily religious). These two aspects are summarised by Fowler's (1984) definition for faith as that on which our loyalty and trust is set, and upon which our hearts rest (Fowler, 1984, p17). Smith (1979) emphasises that faith is an "engagement" with the phenomena that belief only intellectually assents to (Smith, p5). In summary, faith is a response and relationship to that which one believes is the truth or ultimate reality. It incorporates actions, intellect and affect (Fowler, 1981). Faith seems to overlap both concepts of religiosity and spirituality. Having faith may mean the practice of one's religion through prescribed ways of prayer and worship. Exercising faith might mean the perseverance in a spiritual search, despite doubt.

1.4.3. Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religion: Gordon Allport (1950)

Having examined the concepts of spirituality, religion and faith, a final clarification of religiosity must be made, which refers to an influential theory in much of the current literature. Gordon Allport (1950) wrote extensively on what mature religion might encompass, which led to his distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religion (Allport &

Ross, 1967). In response to claims that church goers tend to be more prejudiced than non-churchgoers, he argued that there is a curvilinear relationship between religious participation and prejudice. He found that while regular or semi-regular attenders tended to be more prejudiced, he writes that those who are the most religiously devoted are less prejudiced than other church goers, and non-attenders (Allport & Ross, 1967). He claimed that the reason for this is found in motivations. He distinguishes between extrinsic religion and intrinsic religious orientation, where “the extrinsically motivated person uses his religion, while the intrinsically motivated lives his religion” (Allport & Ross, 1967, p434). To be extrinsically motivated in religious pursuits means to identify one’s self as religious because of the benefits to be derived from it. Allport explains that these might be social benefits, or religion may fulfil a personal need, such as to escape guilt, feel morally superior, or assist in coping with stress. Intrinsic religion is where someone has learned to value the object of their faith for its own sake, with a focus on ultimate reality (or the sacred), rather than the benefits that can be gained from it. An intrinsically motivated individual is not religious solely because it gives them a sense of cohesion, provides social capital, reduces anxiety and helps them to experience joy. These needs may be met within the context of a faith identity, but they are not the reason that this person identifies with a religion or spirituality. Hence, they are religious because they feel that their religion brings them closer to the sacred. In terms of Smith’s (1979) writings on faith, Allport’s theory suggests that a religion that consists of intellectual belief without practice may err towards the extrinsic end of the continuum, whilst someone with an intrinsic religious orientation is more likely to express their faith in their behaviour.

Pargament (1999b) has expressed that theories which split religion by dichotomous reasoning negate the complexity of the construct. Just as individuals differ in the ways that they practice and perceive religion and spirituality, they may also have a unique mixture of motivations – intrinsic and extrinsic (Pargament, 1999b). Whilst Allport’s theory may not be useful for defining religion and spirituality, understanding that religiosity/spirituality have differing sources of motivation may be helpful for predicting certain types of religious behaviour and explain the ways that it may be associated with well-being. It is very unlikely for a person to be motivated solely by intrinsic or extrinsic reasons; however, Allport claims that those whose orientation is towards the intrinsic end of the continuum are the more spiritually mature (Allport & Ross, 1967).

In light of Allport’s consideration of religious motivations, this thesis has used a measure of motivations for church attendance as a possible explanation for why a young

person might score highly in spirituality or religious commitment. Another way of conceptualising it is by asking whether the reasons that a young person might attend church correspond to levels of self-professed religious commitment and spirituality. How religious commitment and spirituality were defined and measured will be outlined in the following and final section of this chapter.

1.4.4. Definitions and Measurement

In summary of the discussion around the distinction between religiosity and spirituality, recent literature has distinguished religion from spirituality as involving the rituals and traditions of a faith community, systems of belief and doctrine, corporate worship, and being affiliated with a community of believers (i.e., church, synagogue, mosque) (Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003a; Good & Willoughby, 2006, 2008; Good et al., 2011; Regnerus & Smith, 2005; Smith & Denton, 2005). Pargament (1999b) defines religion as the search for significance in ways that are related to the sacred. This search is embodied in a particular, prescribed pathway – such as a faith tradition.

The literature conveys multiple understandings of spirituality such as a relation to the transcendent or individual experiences of power (immanence), connectedness to nature, people, or God through a sense of greater purpose or meaning (Ammerman, 2013; Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Fowler, 1981; Good & Willoughby, 2006; Good & Willoughby, 2008). Most authors agree that spirituality pertains to a person's relation to and search for an ultimate reality – or, in Pargament's words, the sacred (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Pargament, 1999b). Various aspects of one's life may also be sanctified and considered to be sacred, such as marriage, family, vocation or nature (Pargament, 1999b). According to Māori mythology, everything has a spirit, or life-force, even that which is not typically considered 'living' such as rocks, land, or bodies of water. Accordingly, Māori spirituality has tended to combine both theistic and immanent qualities. One can experience a spiritual connection to the land, such as mountains and rivers, to other people, and animals (Durie, 1994).

Therefore, for this study, I have conceptualised religiosity as the 'pathway' aspects with relation to the sacred, such as practices and commitment to a specific faith tradition and adhering to this tradition as a way of relating to God, or a Higher Being (or whatever ultimate reality the tradition is oriented towards). I have understood spirituality to incorporate a search for the sacred in ways that do not necessarily include a religious pathway. The sacred may also be more broadly defined. Other aspects of life may have a sacred meaning such as the environment, relationships with significant others, or a vocation (Pargament, 1999b).

I have provided these broad definitions for the benefit of the reader, and in acknowledgement that many authors in this field neglect to address this complex issue (DeHaan et al., 2011). In keeping with literature that has critiqued and conceptualised the different ways that these concepts are measured, this study has incorporated aspects that are commonly measured in both: considering oneself to be a spiritual or religious person, having made a commitment to one's religion, and considering religiosity and faith to be important (DeHaan et al., 2011; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Pearce, Foster, & Hardie, 2013; Zinnbauer et al., 1997). With regard to spirituality, measurement also took into account the idea of feeling connected to the sacred, in accordance with the writings of Pargament (1996, 1999a, 1999b), and whether spirituality impacts one's outlook on life issues such as stress (Pargament, 1996; Pargament, Smith Bruce, Koenig, & Perez, 1998). These ideas have also been influenced by Allport's (1950) writings on mature religion, with the importance of motivation, and the idea that higher religiosity and spirituality tend to be intrinsically motivated dispositions.

1.5. The First Research Question

In the current study, I refrained from giving rigid definitions, but rather used the terms interchangeably (along with 'faith') so as not to introduce a bias as to how the participants chose to answer the questions. As part of the questionnaire, the participants themselves were asked to provide their own definitions. Discovering the meanings of these terms from the perspective of young people brings us to the first question addressed by the current research:

Do young people distinguish between "religiosity" and "spirituality"? If so, in what ways?

In light of the current trends of religious and spiritual affiliation amongst young people in New Zealand, and having examined the historical usages and current definitions of these terms in the literature, this study is concerned with the meaning young adults find in these concepts and how this relates to their developing identity in this domain.

Chapter 2. Development and Identity

2.1. Theories of Spiritual and Religious Development

Most theorists of spiritual development would agree that, over time, our understandings of images, symbols and language for faith and spirituality change. The ways that we relate to the sacred, and perhaps our methods for pursuing what we perceive as sacred change as we grow and develop (Benson, 2008; Fowler, 1981; Oser, Scarlett & Bucher, 2006). However, as a field of inquiry, discovering and conceptualising the ways in which young people change and develop in their spiritual and religious identities is still in its infancy (Roehlkepartain, Benson, & Scales, 2011). Spiritual and religious development is difficult to conceptualise, and is a field in which there are many theories – some that are well developed – but a lag in empirical data. Whilst the present study has not measured spiritual development per se, introducing key theories of spiritual development provides an important background and raises questions about what factors might contribute to this domain. The present study was undertaken under the assumption that religiosity and spirituality are valid domains of development, and factors that contribute to and predict religiosity and spirituality are a focus of this research. Therefore, this section will cover one of the most classic theories of spiritual and religious development.

In the spiritual and religious development of an individual, multiple dimensions are changing, such as the capacity of the individual to search for, experience, or understand a transcendent reality, as well as connection with others, their understanding of life's purpose, and contribution to society (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Benson, Roehlkepartain, & Rude, 2003b). For James Fowler (1981, 1984), “faith development” relates to positive change in the way an individual relates to the self, others, and the ultimate Other. Fowler (1981) argues that spirituality in childhood, adolescence and adulthood is qualitatively different, and can be tracked according to stages. Fowler's (1981, 1984) theory has its foundation in the tradition of the classic stage-structural theorists such as Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg. His stages of faith can be paralleled with transitions that occur in other developmental domains, and proposes that, in theory, faith development is a universal and important domain of development (Fowler & Dell, 2006). While Fowler's theory is a stage-structural theory, it also integrates other areas of development to help explain the underlying mechanisms and reasons for faith development. According to his theory, faith development occurs in conjunction with cognitive development, psychosocial and identity development, as well as moral development (Erikson, 1968; Fowler, 1981, 1984, 2001). Hence, development

in one domain does not occur in isolation with development in other domains (Cupit, 2009; DeHaan et al., 2011; Feldman, 2008; Roehlkepartain et al., 2011). Table 1 displays and summarises Fowler's stages of faith development, and also provides a parallel with Erikson's psychosocial stages, Piaget's cognitive stages, and Kohlberg's stages of morality.

Fowler (1981) writes that faith has its foundation in infancy before it has any structural content. At this stage, attachment is formed with a primary caregiver, and the basic tenets of trust are formed, in accord with Erikson's (1968) lifespan model of development. From this undifferentiated faith to the foundational stage of faith termed, "intuitive-projective" faith, a child's initial perception of the spiritual realm is beginning to be formed and their imagination of the possibilities of this domain are the dominant thought patterns. Stories of people of faith and their spiritual experiences are thought to produce long-lasting images, impressions, and feelings of spirituality and how people are to relate to the divine and the sacred. This process is said to occur when the child is in Piaget's "pre-operational" stage of cognitive development, and the Pre-conventional stage of morality, according to Kohlberg's model (Fowler, 1981). In stage two, "mythic-literal" faith, the focus of the child's symbols of faith is on tangible rules, justice, reciprocity, and stories that portray a clear sense of good and evil. Good people are rewarded, whilst bad people are punished. This is a concrete-operational understanding of faith (in Piagetian terms), because religious ideas and images are understood to be literal and quantifiable (Fowler, 1981). Stage 3, "synthetic-conventional" faith, is said to occur in early adolescence, however, Fowler cautions readers against taking age too literally. Many people do not enter this stage until early adulthood, and for some it may be later, if at all. Synthetic-conventional faith is characterised by a young person beginning to see themselves as having a separate identity from their various social domains, such as school, family, extended family, and peer groups. Although individuals in this stage are very aware that they are separate from these domains, they are dependent on significant others and their worldviews to be a sounding board for the composition of their own faith identity. Note that this parallels the Eriksonian theory of identity formation in adolescence (see the following section of this chapter). Fowler (1981) writes that young people may personalise God to a greater extent during this period than at other stages because of the significant role of family, peers, and other social networks in shaping their sense of self (Fowler, 1981). Faith has not yet become an independent expression of personal identity, but is fused with the culture and people of a young person's particular church or youth group. Fowler (1981) also writes that young people are often

embedded in their religious worldview, and cannot step outside of their own perceptions in order to reflect on them.

Stage 4 is labelled, “individuated-reflective”. For some individuals it may occur in the mid to late twenties, however, Fowler writes that for many it does not occur until the mid-thirties or forties, if it occurs (Fowler, 1981). This stage signals a time of objectifying the religious worldview that was previously synthesised from the perspectives, beliefs and religious practices of family, friends, and their religious community. It is termed ‘individuated’ because the young person can no longer accept religious claims simply because their immediate social circle accepts them. They begin to appraise faith claims according to their own experiences and reasoning. This stage is ‘reflective’ because cognitive development has enabled them to step outside of their own worldview and critically reflect on it. They may feel disoriented and distant from their religious community, and cynical about the symbols and language of their religious tradition. This is the faith equivalent of the identity crisis. This stage seems conceptually similar to a moratorium identity – a term coined by James Marcia (1966), which refers to a period (often during adolescence) in which an individual is exploring multiple identity options prior to making any commitments (Marcia, 1966, 1967). Fowler (1981) writes that if an individual is able to navigate this time, it results in a faith identity that is distinctly personal, meaningful, and independent of the people and authorities that were relied upon in the previous stage.

Table 1. Stages of Faith Paralleled to Erikson, Piaget and Kohlberg (Fowler, 1981)

	Age	Description	Erikson life Stage	Piaget Cognitive Stage	Kohlberg Moral Stage
Undifferentiated Faith	Infancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A pre-stage. - First interactions with caregivers provide the foundations of trust, love, courage and hope. 	1. Trust vs. mistrust (Hope)	1. Sensorimotor	1. Heteronomous Morality (Preconventional)
1. Intuitive-Projective	Early childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perception and imagination are the dominant thought patterns. - Stories produce long-lasting images, impressions and feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Autonomy vs. shame & doubt (Will) 3. Initiative vs. guilt (Purpose) 	2. Preoperational or intuitive	
2. Mythic-Literal	Mid-late childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internalising and ordering the beliefs and stories of one's faith community. - All beliefs, moral rules and symbols are interpreted literally. - Based on reciprocity in which one expects punishment for wrongdoing and reward for doing good. 	4. Industry vs. inferiority (Competence)	3. Concrete operational	2. Instrumental exchange (Preconventional)
3. Synthetic-Conventional	Adolescence (to emerging adulthood)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Composition of a coherent faith identity, that is dependent on others for its construction and sustainability. - Relationships with significant others are a focal point, with concern for the appraisal and expectations of these others. 	5. Identity vs. role confusion (Fidelity)	4. Formal operations and abstract thought	3. Mutual Interpersonal relations (Conventional)
4. Individuative-Reflective	Young adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faith identity no longer defined by others, and now the self is central. - "Demythologises" religious symbols into concepts. - Self-focussed and analytical. 	6. Intimacy vs. isolation (Love)	-	4. Social System and Conscience (Conventional)

5. Conjunctive	Midlife and older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Able to be engaged in a community of faith, whilst understanding that there is no onus on truth. - Care for others extends beyond distinctions of gender, ethnicity and religion. - Lives comfortably with paradox. 	7. Generativity vs stagnation (Care)	-	5. Social contract, individual rights (Postconventional)
6. Universalising	Undifferentiated/late stages of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Envisions a transcendent reality, and lives for its realisation on earth. - Devoted to compassion and respects all being. - Socially unconventional, because they are no longer preoccupied with primal needs such as security, survival or significance. 	8. Integrity vs. despair (Wisdom)	-	6. Universal ethical principles (Postconventional)

Individuative-reflective faith, along with the final two stages - “conjunctive” and “universalising faith” are considered to be mature faith stages (Fowler, 1984). Conjunctive and universalising faith are generative stages, and are less egocentric than earlier ones. Fowler (1981, 1984) proposes that most people do not reach these higher stages, and conjunctive faith is unlikely to occur before the mid to late thirties. Therefore, most adults may remain in synthetic-conventional or individuative-reflective faith, as some empirical literature has found (Keller & Streib, 2013).

Aspects of the mature stages of faith might personify some of the concepts discussed by Fowler (1981), Allport (1950) and more recent researchers such as Russo-Netzer and Mayseless (2014). According to their descriptions mature faith has these aspects in common: (a) doubt precedes development and is a means to a deeper and more sophisticated faith identity, (b) a mature religious or spiritual identity continues to grow and be transformed, (c) it is oriented away from dependence on others for a sense of spiritual cohesion, along with an orientation towards sincere concern for others, and (d) a person of mature faith is often less tied to a set of religious symbols and propositions than those in the less mature stages, or those religious motivations err towards an extrinsic orientation (Allport, 1950; Fowler, 1981, 1984; Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2014). However, in the case of theistic religion, Fowler (1981) suggests that someone of mature faith will often become faithful to the very symbols and language that they previously questioned and grew cynical about during times of doubt and questioning. This renewed acceptance occurs because they now accept that religious symbols and language are imperfect reflections of a deeper reality, and have become more accepting of paradox (the conjunctive stage). They understand that the divine is mysterious and to an extent, unknowable in human terms. They are engaged in a search for the sacred for the value of knowing and encountering whatever or whoever this ultimate reality embodies (Pargament, 2002a).

Fowler’s theory has been influential to the study of religious and spiritual development, but it is not without limitations. A linear model such as Fowler’s does not allow for the possibility that development might be regressive at times, and that someone may demonstrate traits from numerous stages, rather than only one. A further limitation with Fowler’s theory is that linear models are often interpreted by understanding the later stages as being superior to earlier ones. This interpretation fails to recognise that people of any stage may search for, value, and encounter the sacred (Fowler, 1981, Fowler & Dell, 2006). However, Fowler himself asserts that his theory is not intended to be interpreted in this light. He explains that faith development theory should inform developmentally appropriate ways

to educate and encourage individuals in their faith and spirituality, in ways that are appropriate to their stage of faith. Further, he argues that teachers should not engender to provoke transitions into later stages (Fowler & Dell, 2006).

A further criticism of stage-structural theories is that some authors assert that these theories are more applicable to Christianity or monotheistic religions than other faith traditions, and further, that these theories are sympathetic to western values such as rational thought and individuation from external authority. They are less inclusive to collectivist societies or group identities (Heywood, 2008). Finally, the empirical evidence for Fowler's model is limited by inadequate research into diverse populations, and some mixed results in current findings (Friedman, Riebel, Johnson, & Krippner, 2010; Reich, 1993; Streib, 2001).

Keller and Streib (2013) have critiqued Fowler's faith development interview (his primary method for categorising individuals into an overall stage of faith) for not adequately capturing individual characteristics, nor the ways that their faith might resemble both a higher stage in some aspects and a lower stage in others. However, Fowler does explain that people may be in various states of transition, therefore a person may still present with a faith style from a previous stage whilst also adopting aspects from the stage above (Fowler, 1981). A potential new direction for faith development research which is being advanced by Keller and Streib (2013) is the development of a qualitative measure of "religious styles" – the Faith Development Interview. The interview incorporates personal narrative styles and various aspects of development. It is a person-focussed design, and relies on the interviewee to narrate the structure of her or his life (Keller & Streib, 2013). The authors suggest that an individual may possess qualities that would lend to being categorised by a variety of faith stages at once – not only as a transitory state as Fowler proposes (Keller & Streib, 2013). Like Fowler, they take the perspective that development in the spiritual domain is affected by, and integrated with development in other domains.

2.2. The Search for the Self and the Search for the Sacred: Faith and Identity

Erik Erikson, the father of the eight-stage psychosocial model of development throughout the lifespan proposed that adolescence is the time in which the key developmental task is to form a cohesive identity (Erikson, 1956; 1968). Whilst he acknowledges that the identity formation process begins at birth and continues throughout life, in adolescence (and particularly late adolescence) this can come to the fore in the form of a 'crisis' as a significant transition from childhood into young adulthood. According to Erikson, crisis occurs at each new stage of identity formation – when "the usefulness of identification ends" (Erikson,

1956, p68). Crisis is where an adolescent or young adult begins to see themselves as a separate individual to each social domain which characterised their childhood. Erikson conceptualises identity as a sense of personal cohesion, or integrity. An adolescent who becomes aware of their lack of personal cohesion begins to ask these questions: who am I apart from my family? Who am I apart from my friends? Who am I becoming (Erikson, 1956)? This end of identification is said to begin when an individual encounters other identity options and ideologies that have not previously been considered. These other options may elicit feelings of disconnect between one's current identity, and what one perceives they could or should be. This crisis is characterised by a sense of disequilibrium and uncertainty about one's roles, commitments, or existential questions, such as the purpose of one's life (Adams & Marshall, 1996; Erikson, 1956).

Erikson suggests that whilst identity is at the core of the individual, and is about the discovery of the values and roles of the individual, it is also inseparable to the community and culture in which the individual develops. Thus, identity formation sets a foundation for the task of intimacy in the coming years (Erikson, 1956, p57). In fact, Erikson writes as if identity and intimacy are not achieved one after the other, but each informs the other. It is through intimacy that an adolescent learns their identity, and it is this sense of identity which informs intimacy with others. He writes, "For the young individual must learn to be most himself where he means most to others" (Erikson, 1956, p57). It seems that there is an element of learning one's separation from others, yet also learning to share this uniqueness with other unique selves (who are also bound together by commonalities such as culture, religion, occupation, shared interests, and family ties). Thus, the formation of identity is also informed by significant others. Young people experiment with different roles according to the feedback they receive and the values they perceive are held by those they most respect (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966; Shwartz, 2001). They further emulate the values they see in the lives of these others (King, 2003). King (2003) explains that religious communities provide this social context in which an adolescent is able to explore identity. It also provides a context for asking questions about ideology, meaning and purpose. The exploration of these issues is often part of identity formation, and provides a possible explanation for why psychological well-being, and social connectedness for that matter, may differ between teenagers who have developed a spiritual identity and those who are in a stage of 'crisis' (Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra, & Dougher, 1994).

Religious/spiritual identity is theorised to be one of the many domains that make up the overall identity of a person (King, 2003; Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2013; Marcia,

1966). Marcia (1966, 1967), building on Erikson's work, developed a theory of identity development which posited that the degree of exploration and commitment that young people engage in across relational and occupational pursuits, and ideological beliefs determines their identity status. Identity achievement is attained after an individual goes through a period of exploration and then makes a commitment to an identity relevant construct. An identity status of 'moratorium' is characterised by high exploration with no commitments, and may resemble an identity crisis, while an identity status of 'foreclosure' is indicative of a high degree of commitment in the absence of any exploration of other alternatives. Finally, an identity status of 'diffusion' is where there has been no exploration and no commitment- the individual is not engaged in the identity formation process (Kroger, 2003; Marcia, 1966). Furthermore, the diffused individual may be dependent on others for a sense of identity and personal cohesion. Marcia's theory suggests that an individual's identity is comprised of identity commitments across various domains. A valid question that could be raised is whether an individual can have an achieved identity status in one domain, such as their occupation, but be diffused with regard to another domain, such as religion and spirituality? Can an individual be in different states of commitment and exploration in different domains? In this regard, the development of a strong spiritual and religious identity may be one of those identity domains that contributes to the overall identity of the individual (Good & Willoughby, 2008; Magdali-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2013); particularly if matters of faith and spirituality are of central concern, someone may perceive other aspects of their identity in light of their spirituality (Kiesling, Sorell, Montgomery, & Colwell, 2006).

Kroger (2003) reports that of the many studies that have been conducted on Marcia's identity statuses, about half of the adolescents were still in diffused or foreclosed states (Kroger, 2003, p215). Based on this finding, it could be concluded that on average, younger adolescents do not enter a time of identity crisis as first proposed by Erikson. Identity exploration and commitment are more common in late adolescence – perhaps precipitated by encountering more significant decisions, commitments and responsibilities than when they were in high school. Smith and Snell's (2009) research also supports the idea that particularly in relational and ideological domains, many emerging adults have not encountered a crisis or engaged in exploration, let alone reached an achieved identity.

Some have found that the four identity statuses from Marcia's theory tend to be associated with certain styles of practicing religiosity or spirituality. Foreclosed individuals are those who have not been through any kind of faith crises, but have adopted the beliefs of their parents and church without question. There is some evidence to suggest that young

people who are high in foreclosure tend to exhibit higher prejudice against minority groups and higher levels of fundamentalism (Allport & Ross, 1967; Fulton, 1997; Leak & Randall, 1995). Other indicators of identity foreclosure in a religious setting may be expressed in extreme devotion. For example, Mormon youth in the United States tend to be highly devoted to their religious worldview, and there is research to suggest that they have higher levels of foreclosure than other religious youth (Markstrom-Adams & Smith, 1996; Smith & Denton, 2005). In the U.S., these young people regularly attend religious education classes at 5am on school days, they seemed to be the most articulate about their faith, and appear to follow the conduct prescribed by their church very closely (Dean, 2010). Dean (2010) expresses concerns that these youths are denied the opportunity for healthy exploration. However, along with peers of other faiths who were highly devoted to their faith, Mormon youths showed higher adjustment and more positive outcomes compared to mildly religious and non-religious adolescents (Smith & Denton, 2005). Although Smith and Denton (2005) found that the most devoted youth in their study seemed to experience higher levels of psychosocial well-being, characteristics of foreclosure may also include resistance to and insecurity when facing change (Shwartz, 2001). Other researchers have found that religious individuals who are foreclosed exhibit higher levels of prejudice and authoritarianism (Fulton, 1997), and may be more likely to display fundamentalist tendencies when they feel that their beliefs are being threatened (Shaffer & Hastings, 2007). Keisling and colleagues (2006) found that when spiritually foreclosed individuals were asked about the consequences of neglecting their spirituality, they expressed a sense of anxiety about failing their family, religious community, or God. Further, they feared a loss of identity cohesion and rejection from significant others. Therefore, it may be that foreclosure provides a sense of safety, security and homeostasis when the environment is favourable, but also means that the individual is unable to adapt to faith challenges, doubts, and other changes that they may encounter as they enter university or the workforce.

Most researchers have measured identity status as categorical constructs, or on dimensions of exploration and commitment (Adams, 1998; Marcia, 1966). A different strategy was employed in the current study. Identity status was measured as four ordinal variables in which individual difference on all four statuses could be analysed. It is also important to bear in mind that in this study, identity status was measured only in the domain of religiosity and spirituality. It does not refer to global identity. Rather, I have taken the perspective of Marcia (1967) and others that faith development is a domain of identity development. It is theoretically plausible to suppose that in many individuals certain domains

of identity, such as religiosity and spirituality, develop at a different rate to other domains. Kiesling and Sorell (2009) further discuss that for various reasons, the domain of religiosity and spirituality might remain unexplored for many individuals. However, for those who do engage in matters of faith and explore this domain, they speculate that mechanisms such as socialisation, culture, curiosity, dissatisfaction, cognitive development or cognitive dissonance may cause individual differences in timing and content during the formation of an achieved religious/spiritual identity (Kiesling & Sorell, 2009).

Levels of exploration and commitment have also been associated with aspects of faith maturity and Fowler's stages of faith development. Leak (2009) examined relationships between aspects of faith development and Marcia's identity status paradigm. Participants were administered several measures of faith development such as the Religious Maturity scale (Leak & Fish, 1999), which was developed to measure mature religion in accordance with Allport's (1967) conceptualisation of intrinsic and extrinsic religion, and the faith development scale which measures stages of faith according to Fowler's theory. They measured identity development using the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, which assesses levels of exploration and commitment in relational, vocational and ideological domains. The results showed that the achievement status was associated with firmer religious commitments (measured according to Allport's theory of religious maturity), while the diffused status was associated with low religious commitment, and moratorium was associated with greater faith development (measured according to Fowlers stages of faith), but lower commitment than the achieved status. These findings suggest that faith development may correspond with identity status.

Identity status in the religious or spiritual domain may also affect well-being. Hunsberger, Pratt and Pancer (2001) found that individuals in their late teens who had an achieved identity tended to display higher well-being, including self-esteem, and also experienced little religious change from the end of high school to beginning university. Those who were religious remained so – apparently having already experienced a crisis, and had committed to a religious identity. Moratorium individuals were those who were searching, and were low in religious commitment. They displayed significantly lower self-esteem than the other groups, and high levels of religious doubt. Contrary to expectations, diffused individuals also tended to show high levels of religious doubt, which suggests some engagement in religious exploration. However, they also avoided searching out information that would help to confirm or disconfirm belief (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001). This suggests that whilst they were experiencing doubt, they were not engaged in a search to

resolve those doubts. Keisling, Sorell, Montgomery and Colwell (2006) interviewed twenty-eight devout men and women of a variety of ages; the youngest being twenty-two. They employed phenomenological content analysis in order to categorise the participants into each identity status. Exploration was assessed according to how flexible they perceived their roles to be in their families, work places and other life domains. Commitment was based on the importance they placed on such roles. They found that the spirituality of participants in moratorium was oriented towards searching for truth, transcending the conventions of their childhood faith, and having high personal autonomy. Achieved individuals were better equipped to explain their spirituality, and most described their spirituality as deeply impacting their self-concept. In addition, they reported having experienced higher psychological well-being as a result of their spiritual commitment.

Marcia's theory of identity statuses may provide a robust structural theory, however, it does not illuminate the content that spiritual and religious identities take. Knowing that one has made a commitment to something is not the same as that aspect becoming integrated into a cohesive self within one's other commitments (e.g., occupational, relational, political). Gillespie (1979) writes that the formation of a 'cohesive self' is a lifelong process, and this type of identity development must occur beyond merely committing to a religious or spiritual orientation. We cannot assume that the process of identity formation is completed by simply 'putting on' a religious or spiritual outlook (Gillespie, 1979). Presumably, growth and change in these commitments, and perhaps, exploring the meanings of these commitments take place over time. Perhaps it is encapsulated in the questions: what are the sorts of commitments might a young person make with regard to religion and spirituality? What are the aspects of the self that are found within a search for the sacred? Theories of faith development may help inform how religious and spiritual identities take shape. They also suggest that, like all psychosocial development, there is often an association between age and the development of these identities.

Some qualitative researchers have examined the relation between spirituality and identity, and also the contents of spiritual and religious identities (Kiesling & Sorell, 2009; Kiesling et al., 2006; Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2014). Russo-Netzer and Mayseless (2014) found that in interviews with adults who were classified as having mature spiritual identities apart from a religious institution, spiritual identity change was the result of multiple cycles of exploration and commitment. Keisling and Sorell (2009) also found this pattern of spiritual change in their participants. They write that for their participants, being able to 'reconceptualise the self' within a spiritual identity tended to occur after a painful transition

period involving doubt and guilt (Kiesling & Sorrell, 2009, p266). This echoes the writings of Adams and Marshall (1996) in which they describe the identity crises as one of ‘ship wreck’ - before a new identity is achieved. A person may feel bewildered and fragmented – as if the self is collapsing (Adams & Marshall, 1996, p435). Russo-Netzer and Mayseless (2014) found that the contents of these changes occurred in participants’ understandings of themselves, their priorities, and core values. The contents of their spiritual identities included authenticity and agency which also (paradoxically) incorporated a surrender of the self. They also experienced openness to new experiences, and a desire to find truth. The authors conclude that rather than conceptualising spiritual identity in terms of the identity statuses, they suggest that it might be more accurate to think of the spiritual identity process as a reciprocal interaction between moratorium-achieved-moratorium-achieved (MAMA), rather than a linear process (Stephen, Fraser, & Marcia, 1992).

2.3. The Second and Third Research Questions

In light of the discussion of theories of religious and spiritual development, and spirituality and religiosity as a domain of identity development, it can be appreciated that spiritual and religious development is difficult to quantify. Further, what it means to have a spiritual or faith identity (“faith identity” is the most common term used in the current study) is also difficult to conceptualise statistically. For this reason the second research question was addressed by qualitatively analysing a series of interviews. The second question is:

What factors do young adults perceive as influencing the development of their faith and spirituality? Listening to young adults talk about their own faith gives a different type of insight over simply measuring spirituality, religion, and faith identity status, which were part of the quantitative measures of the current study.

The focus of the third research question is on faith identity. Having introduced and considered important theories and research regarding identity and spiritual/faith identity, the third research question is:

How are faith identity factors associated with measures of religious motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), social connectedness (parental and peer attachment, community connectedness, and religiosity in the microsystem), demographic factors (gender, socioeconomic status, and age), and mental health (psychological well-being, anxiety, and depression)?

Bivariate associations will be used to determine the nature of these associations. So far, this thesis has only covered definitional issues, spiritual development and faith identity.

The focus of the following two chapters will be on these other factors (social connectedness, demographics, and mental health) that may be associated with faith identity, and may also be associated with both spiritual and religious affiliation, and mental well-being.

Chapter 3. Psychosocial Factors and their Relationship to Spirituality, Religion and Well-being

3.1. Predictors of Spirituality and Religiosity, and the Power of Socialisation

Whilst there is a large dearth in the spirituality/religiosity research on New Zealand youth and emerging adults, research from North America has been instrumental in the formation of possible explanations into why young people are religious or spiritual. The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) (Smith & Denton, 2005) is a large scale longitudinal study that has yielded data concerning religiosity and faith in the lives of young Americans from early adolescence to emerging adulthood. Some interesting findings published in Smith and Denton's (2005) work were that a large percentage of youths reported that religion is an important part of their lives, and most reported a belief in God. However, they also found their religious beliefs were not the dominant framework of their lives and identities. Rather, the researchers reported that there are various narratives of western culture, such as individualism, consumerism, and rational empiricism, that young adults are not conscious of. Many of these macro cultural narratives have implicitly socialised these youth to a greater extent than religion. They also found that many of the young people were inarticulate about spirituality, religion, the teachings of their churches, and what they believed.

Smith and Snell (2009) presented the findings of this same cohort 5 years after the first wave of data collection, where the age of the participants ranged from 18-23. Whilst many of the same cultural influences remained salient for this population, the authors emphasised the unique challenges to this generation of emerging adults. These young adults were entering a job market that now often requires more than a Bachelor's degree, therefore they remained in tertiary study for much longer. They were also delaying marriage, and were financially unable to consider buying their own home at the same age that their parents did. Hence, they were reaching many of the adult milestones much later than their parents' generation. Smith and Snell (2009) also described this time of delay as a time of considering a vast array of options but making few commitments. In Marcian terms (1966, 1967), emerging adulthood is a time that is characterised by vocational and relational moratorium more than any other time of life.

But what about within the sphere of religion and spirituality? According to the results and interviews of the NSYR, the faith and religious practices of these young adults had remained more or less stable since their teens. Although many young adults were

experiencing transition and upheaval in their lives, their religious affiliations and core beliefs remained largely the same as when they were teenagers. Smith and Snell (2009) reported that 84% of the teenagers who were in the top percentile in terms of their religious devotion, fitted into the same category as emerging adults. Over half of their sample rated themselves as being in the same religious tradition as when they were teens, and the majority of those who were disengaged from any religious affiliation as teens remained disengaged as young adults. In fact, the authors also note that of those who had ever made a commitment to God, the majority had done so before their mid-teens. Only 5% of those did so as young adults, and of the small percentage of those who did, they were likely to have experienced at least some religious socialisation as children or adolescents, such as parents who were religious at one time, or had remained so throughout the young person's life, had attended Sunday school with a neighbouring family, or mixed with religiously affiliated peers (Smith & Snell, 2009, p246). Of the many studies that have been published about this data, there is a consensus that those whose early socialisation experiences have lent them towards religion and faith, tend to remain consistently religious or spiritual throughout the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood (McNamara Barry, Prenoveau, Diehl, & Colter, 2013; Petts, 2009; Regnerus & Smith, 2005; Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith, Denton, Faris, & Regnerus, 2002; Smith & Snell, 2009; Snell, 2009; Uecker, Regnerus, & Vaaler, 2007).

The two main ways that religion was measured in the NSYR were attendance (regularity of attending church/mass or youth group) and salience (self-reported importance of one's religious beliefs and practices). According to Smith and Snell (2009), both measures showed a small decline into young adulthood. The decline in religious salience was only slight, while the decline in religious attendance was more pronounced. Therefore, it appears that while young adults on average remained in the same religious affiliation as in their teens, and considered their religious beliefs to be important to them, within that affiliation, their public participation decreased.

What are these influences that seem to predict religious participation and affiliation? Smith and Denton (2005) emphasise the importance of socialisation in the development of faith in youth. Of course, socialisation is crucial to all areas of development, and as Smith and Denton (2005) have pointed out, it is the vehicle for which society and culture replicates itself. The authors proposed that these emerging adults, although much different from their parents' generation, reflected values that were instilled into them by a generation who underwent a shift away from reliance on institutional authorities, pursued the American

dream, and began to understand and use religion and spirituality as being a matter of personal choice, and a means to personal happiness and fulfilment. Hence, the authors argued that in most cases, adolescents and emerging adults did not receive deliberate and explicit religious socialisation, but rather, internalised the wider cultural narratives of the U.S. The dominant narratives and values of American society (and this is somewhat similar in other western nations) are liberal individualism, capitalism, consumerism, and to a slightly lesser extent, rational empiricism. Secularisation has meant that religious values and worldviews are much less influential in public discourse than these other implicit influences (Bradstock, 2010; Smith & Denton, 2005). Smith and Denton (2005) argued that young people need consistent socialisation in order to adopt religion, and they need very explicit socialisation in order to develop a language for understanding and communicating a religious worldview. They concluded that because the influences of western society are so pervasive, with religion no longer being a dominant narrative, the worldviews of its youth are a reflection of the dominant voices, with a few religious beliefs tacked on. As discussed above, the lack of growth in Christian affiliation in New Zealand may also be a reflection of the dominant narratives of secular society being more influential than religious education (Bradstock, 2010).

Smith and Snell (2009) outlined a cluster of factors which tended to predict high religious devotion in emerging adulthood. These factors included social influences, as well as past behaviour. The top five predictors included the importance of parental religious attendance and salience, having had religious experiences, salience of religion as a teenager, prayer and scripture reading, and interestingly, having few or no doubts about one's faith. A couple of these factors raise some questions regarding previous chapters of this thesis. Firstly, many researchers have measured prayer and scripture reading as included in measures of religious practice. Hence, it is conceptually problematic to state that religious practices predict religious salience. The authors do not state whether there is high multicollinearity for these two variables, however, it seems just as plausible for religious salience to predict religious practice. Secondly, in light of the literature on faith development, it is intriguing that the findings from the NSYR suggest that experiencing religious doubts may indeed be detrimental to religious devotion. Having few, or no doubts was such a powerful predictor of increased religious devotion that highly religious young adults who had had little religious socialisation from parents and peers, tended to be those who had experienced few or no doubts about their faith (Smith & Snell, 2009). It was as if this variable compensated for the lack of influence and affirmation from significant others with regard to religion. In some

respects, this fits well with Fowler's (1981) description of synthetic-conventional faith, where the input of significant others is vital. In the absence of these significant others, possessing a very strong sense of belief may be crucial to forming and maintaining a cohesive faith identity. On the other hand, it conflicts with theorists who suggest that doubt may be an important component to faith development (Allport, 1950; Fowler, 1981; Kiesling & Sorrel, 2009; Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2014). This seems to be an area that requires further research, however, as I proposed in a previous section, quantitative measures of religiosity and spirituality alone may not be able to tap into the qualitative components of faith, such as the characteristics of faith stages, transitions, and mature versus immature faith.

A different quantitative study called the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health assessed predictors of religiosity. Regnerus, Smith and Smith (2004) presented results of the second wave of data, where the most significant predictors of adolescent religious attendance was the attendance of their parents (but not parental religious salience), and slightly less so, the attendance of their friends, and religiosity of their school. The most significant predictors of religious salience were religious salience of parents, followed by the salience of friends and school. The social predictors for attendance were not as strong. In the case of their parents, the authors proposed that one of the more simple explanations is that parents are able to enforce church attendance up until a certain age. The strongest predictor overall was religious attendance and salience during the first wave of measurement. Previous religiosity predicted current religiosity. This suggests that the roots of religiosity may be found before adolescence, which also confirms Smith and Snell's (2009) findings that the most devoted young adults were usually those who had committed to their faith before the age of fourteen. Being female and increased family satisfaction also predicted greater religious salience (Regnerus, Smith, & Smith, 2004).

Gunnoe and Moore (2002) also reported data that suggests that socialisation in the form of social role models in childhood and adolescence are significant predictors of religious salience, attendance, and frequency of prayer in emerging adulthood. In their study, they did not have access to data on fathers, but found that the presence of religious, supportive mothers was highly predictive of religiosity; however, peer religiosity exerted a slightly stronger influence. Factors such as being female, and childhood church attendance were also significant predictors. The current study builds upon this previous research by including social factors in addition to personal factors, such as identity and motivation, as explanations for spirituality and religiosity.

3.2. Psychosocial and Demographic Factors as Predictors of Religiosity and Well-being

According to faith development theory (Fowler, 1981; 1984), “synthetic-conventional” faith (often emerging in adolescence) is a stage in which finding cohesion in one’s faith identity depends on one’s support network and significant others. As mentioned above, having a supportive mother who is also religious increases the likelihood of religiosity as an emerging adult (Gunnore & Moore, 2002). These two aspects of support and religiosity of one’s parents, including other close relationships provide one explanatory pathway towards religious devotion. It is likely that young people who feel supported by their microsystem are more likely to adopt the values and identity of the microsystem through socialisation (Adams, 1998; Erikson, 1968). If family and friends strongly identify as being religious or spiritual, it increases the likelihood of adopting a religious or spiritual identity. It seems logical that this would be even more likely if a young person feels connected to and supported by their family and friends (Desmond, Morgan, & Kikuchi, 2010). Researchers have only recently begun to take a special interest on the effects of relationship quality of religious families in predicting youth well-being, as well as religiosity and spirituality (Mahoney & Cano, 2014). For example, adolescents who have internalised their religiosity often report feeling closer to their parents (Mahoney, 2010) and report more satisfaction with their relationships with their parents (Regnerus & Uecker, 2006). Hence, relationship quality with parents and friends has been measured as a covariate in this study, along with the presence of religion and faith in the microsystem. This addresses socialisation and social support as alternative explanations to youth spirituality and well-being.

Social well-being has recently received greater focus in the New Zealand literature on adolescents (Crespo, Kielpikowski, Pryor, & Jose, 2011; Jose & Pryor, 2010; Jose, Ryan, & Pryor, 2012; Karcher, 2008). The term “connectedness” has been defined as a perceived bond or sense of belonging that may be expressed in domains such as immediate family attachments, friendships, school, the wider community, and in many cases, church (Jose & Pryor, 2010; Jose et al., 2012; Whitlock, 2004). Connectedness has been implicated with greater well-being in various domains, such as experiencing positive affect, life satisfaction, and future orientation (Jose, Ryan & Pryor, 2012; Whitlock, 2004). Results from the NSYR (Smith & Denton, 2005) suggest that spiritually committed youths experience a high degree of connectedness with their parents, and members of their churches. They were more likely than their less religiously devoted peers to report that they felt cared for by their parents/caregivers, and less likely to report feelings of isolation or being misunderstood.

They also report a higher number of supportive adults in their lives – who were generally known to their parents (Smith and Denton, 2005).

Involvement in a religious community is common to most faith traditions. Social support is often credited to be a potential and viable causal mechanism for the link between lower depressive symptoms and religiosity (Smith, McCullough, & Poll, 2003), and some researchers have theorised that the link between higher religiosity and higher well-being may be best explained by social support and social capital that churches often provide (Good & Willoughby, 2006; Stark, 2000; Stark & Finke, 2000). This is also a reason why, in studies that assess the association between well-being and religion, simply measuring religiosity by church attendance may not be tapping into religious commitment or devotion, but the extent to which a young person is experiencing social support by their religious community. For example, Good and Willoughby (2006) measured the association between religiosity, spirituality, and a range of psychosocial adjustment factors in Canadian college students. Their results suggested that for some young people, connectedness to their community had more of an impact on their well-being than their personal beliefs. The authors conclude that being connected to any community may predict psychosocial adjustment, and not just connectedness to a religious community (Good & Willoughby, 2006). However, in a later longitudinal study, the researchers extended and specified their measures to include both institutional and personal aspects of religiosity and spirituality. They found that both types of measures were positively associated with aspects of well-being such as psychosocial adjustment and lower substance use (Good & Willoughby, 2014).

In Dew et al.'s (2008) study on the effects of religiosity on adolescents with depression, they found that young people who felt abandoned or alienated from their religious community suffered worse symptoms than those who did not. Similarly, Pearce et al (2003) found that youths who perceived that members of their church community were critical or demanding were likely to experience higher levels of depression. These results make sense in light of research on the positive effects of connectedness and social support on mental well-being (Jose & Pryor, 2010; Jose et al., 2012). It may be that in adolescence and young adulthood religious communities have a particularly salient impact on well-being. According to Fowler (1981; 1984) and Erikson (1968), at this time youths are drawing together a cohesive religious worldview and personal identity. These identity processes are heavily dependent on significant others who are admired, emulated, and who can reflect a projection of identity back to the youth (Erikson, 1968; Fowler, 1981,).

Family cohesion and connectedness may also have a distinctive impact of well-being and religiosity. In a recent study, it was found that regular service attendance with parents in childhood resulted in higher well-being and higher religious participation in adolescence (Petts, 2014).

3.2.1. Demographic Predictors

Although religion and spirituality are often assumed to be freely chosen (Stark & Finke, 2000), several studies have shown that certain demographic characteristics may be predicting factors. For example, studies from North America often have controlled for which U.S. state the participants originate, because it influences the type of religious affiliation and denomination. A higher percentage of people who live in the Southern States are conservative Baptists compared with the rest of the U.S. (Gunnore & Moore, 2002; Smith & Denton, 2005). Gender is another factor that has been shown to be associated with differences in religiosity and spirituality. The literature consistently shows that on average, females tend to be more religious than males, and males are more likely to report no religious affiliation (Gunnore & Moore, 2002; Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Smith et al., 2002). This is also reflected in the New Zealand census, where slightly more males than females between 15 and 24 reported no religion (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Hence, it is important to control for and measure such proxy variables.

Theories of spiritual development – especially stage-structural theories – assume that spirituality and faith change and develop with time, and therefore are associated with age in some way (Fowler 1981). Conversely, research from the NSYR suggests that religious participation and attendance declined slightly with age between the teenage years and the mid-twenties (Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Smith & Snell, 2009). Data from the 2013 census in New Zealand suggests that adolescents and young adults tend to be less religious than middle-aged and older adults, however this does not give an indication of religious change (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Hence, there are conflicting hypotheses about the role of chronological age in spiritual development. On the one hand, those who are brought up in religious environments theoretically have greater exposure to religious socialisation. Age also brings greater cognitive development, and (for many) an increased ability to reason about abstract concepts (Piaget, 1975), such as spirituality and faith. On the other hand, the research that has been reported on above does not indicate that religiosity or spirituality increase with age. On the contrary, the evidence seems to support the opposite; that younger

adolescents are more religious than older adolescents and emerging adults (Regnerus & Uecker, 2006).

Ethnicity is another factor that may be associated with differences in religiosity and spirituality. The New Zealand census data shows that between Europeans and Māori there were very small differences in the percentages of those who reported no religion (46.9% of Europeans, and 46.3% of Māori). This figure is much different for the Pacific Island, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African populations, where approximately only 17% professed to have no religious affiliation. Among the Asian population, this figure was 30%.

Finally, results from the NSYR suggest that socioeconomic status as measured by parental education level may have had some impact on young adult religiosity (Denton, 2012). Young adults whose parents had a college degree tended to be slightly less engaged in religion over time. Others have found that socioeconomic status appears to make no significant difference (Gunnore & Moore, 2002). In the present study, socioeconomic status was measured by the employment status of both the participants' parents.

3.3. The Fourth Research Question

There are various psychosocial and demographic factors that may influence religiosity and spirituality in young people. The fourth research question examines the following:

Does faith identity predict levels of spirituality and religious commitment over and above religious motivation, social connectedness, and demographic factors?

Chapter 4. Spirituality, Religion and Mental Well-being

Having considered the importance of socialisation, psychosocial factors and demographic factors as being influential to religiosity and spirituality in youth and young adults, this chapter will now turn to theory and research regarding the association between religiosity, spirituality and mental health.

New Zealand Māori models of health tend to include wairua (spirit) as an essential component of well-being. According to Durie's (1994) Tapa Wha model of health, spiritual well-being underpins, and is interconnected to social, emotional and mental well-being. Māori models for health are part of the health sciences curriculum; however, the New Zealand literature about spirituality and well-being in young people is very limited (and almost non-existent). Yet in other nations, there is a growing body of research from other countries to suggest that spirituality and religion are beneficial for well-being. The well-being variables that were used in the present study were anxiety, depression, and general psychological well-being which incorporated self-esteem, hope, positivity about the future, and a sense of meaning. Instead of separately introducing the literature about the effects of spirituality and religion on each of the variables, I have organised this chapter according to salient issues that need to be considered in the study of religiosity and well-being in keeping with recent reviews (Baetz & Toews, 2009; Koenig, 2009; Pargament, 2002a).

Investigating the impact of religiosity and spirituality on mental health raises some important questions, and the research to date suggests that religiosity and spirituality can be associated with both positive and negative mental health. It is important to consider which aspects of religiosity and spirituality may be involved in these associations and why they are involved. The next three sections are organised under the following themes, where the association between religiosity, spirituality and mental health depend upon: types of religious appraisals and spiritual coping, certainty of belief versus doubt, and the provision of a sense of meaning and personal coherence. There is a lack of empirical research on the link between religiosity, spirituality and well-being in adolescents and young adults. The research reviewed in this chapter has mostly involved adult populations and I have included research involving young people where possible. This is an area where further research is needed, and is one of the reasons why the current study is an important contribution to this field.

4.1. Types of Religious/Spiritual Appraisals and Coping

There is some evidence to suggest that religion and spirituality are beneficial to psychological well-being in young people. Smith and Denton (2005) found that religiously affiliated teens reported high levels of satisfaction with their appearance. This is suggestive of high self-esteem, at least at a physical level. In a different study, researchers found that young peoples' conceptions of God moderated the association between religiosity and self-esteem. Francis, Gibson, and Robins (2001) measured the association between self-worth and perceptions of God in 866 young adolescents in Scotland. The findings suggested that levels of self-esteem depended on the content of the participants' beliefs about God. Perceiving God as loving and forgiving was associated with higher self-worth, whilst perceptions of a cruel or punishing God were associated with lower self-worth. This was a simple correlational design, therefore causation or prediction cannot be determined. However, it does contribute to other research that has examined attachment to God in relation to self-esteem (Benson & Spilka, 1973; Kirkpatrick, 1992, 1998). Perceiving God to be an ally and partner as a method of coping has also been associated with higher self-esteem (Pargament, 2002b).

Dew, Daniel, Goldston and Koenig (2008) found that certain aspects of religiosity predicted lower depression in a group of adolescent outpatients. However, they also reported that young people who did not exercise forgiveness, or who felt abandoned or unforgiven by God experienced higher levels of depression. While religiosity and spirituality appear to provide unique resources for well-being, not all expressions of religiosity are beneficial, and for some individuals, they are associated with pathology (Oser et al., 2006; Pargament et al., 1998). A young person may appraise a time of illness as punishment from God, which could lead to further distress rather than positive coping. However, a different young person may experience a sense of peace through surrendering control to a God whom they believe is sovereign (Koenig, 2008). There is also some evidence to suggest that revenge seeking mediates the association between positive religious coping and social anxiety (Hall & Flanagan, 2013), where feeling forgiven and loved by God may reduce the likelihood that a young person will cope with stressful social situations by seeking revenge.

Aside from being a source of adaptive or non-adaptive coping (Pargament, 2002a), certain sects of religious beliefs, and strict cults may contribute to pathology, rather than well-being (Oser, Scarlett & Bucher, 2006). Pargament (2002b) also alludes to the fact that the research suggests that religion that is intrinsically motivated, internalised, and involves security in one's relationship with God is beneficial to many aspects of well-being, including self-esteem, positivity about the future, and also lower symptoms of anxiety and depression

(Matby & Day, 2000; Pargament, 2002b). Religion may be detrimental to well-being when it is externally motivated, unexamined, and based on ideas of a punishing or punitive God (Maltby & Day, 2000; Smith et al., 2003). Therefore, it is too simplistic to make a global generalisation about religiosity or spirituality as being beneficial or detrimental to well-being. Current research suggests that the type of religiosity/spirituality (whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic; the reasons that an individual has for being religious, including their expectations) and individual beliefs should be taken into consideration (Blazer, 2009; Pargament, 2002a; Pössel et al., 2011).

The literature is divided when it comes to the effects of religiosity and spirituality on anxiety, and it is possible that this is another area in which it depends on what type of religion and spirituality that is being practiced. Some studies have found a positive association between religiosity and higher anxiety, however, the young people in these samples experienced higher levels of religious guilt, over-compliance, and exhibited more extrinsically oriented religiosity (Peterman, LaBelle & Steinberg, 2014). A spiritually based intervention that incorporated contemplation, forgiveness, awareness of the sacred, ethical living, and practicing daily spirituality was effective in reducing generalised anxiety in a small sample of young adults (aged 18 plus), with retention of treatment effects after three months (Koszycki, Bilodeau, Raab-Mayo, & Bradwejn, 2014). This study is compelling due to the inclusion of a control group in which participants completed a standardised psychotherapy intervention. The control group also saw positive effects, however the spiritually based intervention was comparable, and even slightly more efficacious. However, the authors caution the generalisability of the study at this stage due to the small sample size. In contrast, it seems that religious practices which promote self-focus, rumination, and feelings of guilt are linked to higher anxiety, while religiosity or spirituality that promotes mindfulness, compassion, connectedness, and a secure relationship to the divine seems to promote lower anxiety.

Finally, Davis, Kerr and Kurpus (2003) found that gender appeared to moderate the relationship between religiosity and anxiety, in that young males who scored highly in religious well-being and intrinsic religious orientation experienced lower levels of anxiety. However, there was no effect for females.

4.2. Certainty versus Doubt

Strength and certainty of belief may also be an important consideration in the association between spirituality/religiosity and well-being (Ellison, 1991; Krause, Ingersoll-

Dayton, Ellison, & Wulff, 1999). Religious doubt may have deleterious effects on subjective well-being, and some research suggests that these effects are greater in young people compared with middle-aged adults or the elderly (Galek, Krause, Ellison, Kudler, & Flannelly, 2007; Krause et al., 1999). This may be because young people are at a more tenuous stage in their faith development. For example, individuals in the synthetic-conventional faith stage (which is theorised to occur in adolescence or young adulthood, see Table 1) may experience questions and doubts as distressing, since the main focus for this stage is the construction of a coherent faith identity (Fowler, 1981). If it is the case that religious doubting has a negative impact on mental health, are the classic theorists wrong about the need for crisis and moratorium to occur prior to identity development and achievement? Some researchers have found that strong belief (or the absence of doubt) – whether religious or non-religious, may be a greater predictor of increased well-being than the contents of religious beliefs (Donelson, 1999). Further, Hunsberger, Patt and Pancer (2001) found that mental health outcomes did not significantly differ between the highly religious and the definitively non-religious. As reviewed above, theorists of identity development have proposed that exploration and commitment motivated by an identity crisis is essential to the formation of a mature or an achieved identity (Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2003; Marcia, 1966), and even that over the life span, individuals experience multiple iterations of moratorium and achievement (Stephen et al., 1992). Theorists of faith development have also proposed that mature faith is reached through crisis and doubting (Allport, 1950; Fowler, 1981; Kiesling & Sorell, 2009), and this is supported by qualitative evidence (Kiesling et al., 2006; Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2014). However, quantitative findings from American studies on emerging adults seem to suggest that religious doubting is associated with lower well-being (Galen, 2014). Is it necessary for well-being to be compromised in these processes of development which, psychologists assume (perhaps prematurely) result in a more healthy and mature human being? Another possibility is that subjective, self-report measures of constructs such as self-esteem, positive affect, and hope only tap into temporary states of being. It may be that these states are not indicative of long term well-being.

4.3. Sense of Meaning and Coherence

A possible reason for the detrimental effects of doubt is that it threatens the sense of coherence that religion can provide, and therefore undermines the benefits of a potentially rich source of coping (Galek et al., 2007). Religious belief systems provide a framework through which to interpret and make sense of life's experiences. Researchers have noted that

one of the pathways through which religiosity and spirituality may exert beneficial effects on well-being is through providing existential well-being (Mariano & Damon, 2008; Park, 2005; Youniss et al., 1999). Davis, Kerr and Kurpus (2003) found that the relationship between spirituality and depression may be mediated by existential well-being. This suggests that spirituality/religiosity may exert direct effects on a young person's perception of meaning and purpose in life. Classic existentialists, such as Viktor Frankl (2004), theorised that meaning and purpose had a direct association to levels of depression. Frankl asserted that many (although not all) incidences of depression were related to a frustrated sense of meaning – an “existential vacuum” (Frankl, 2004, p143). Without a sense of meaning, hopelessness ensues (Frankl, 2004). A common characteristic of depression is negativity about the future and the absence of hope. Therefore, it may be that spirituality and religiosity reduce depression because they promote a healthy sense of meaning and purpose (Park, 2005; Youniss et al., 1999). With regard to depression, teens in the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) who were high in religious commitment reported the fewest instances of depressed feelings, and the highest rates of “never” feeling depressed. They also reported thinking of the meaning of life more often than their peers and were less likely to view life as meaningless (however, low percentages of teens reported that they felt life was meaningless), and were also more likely to think about and plan for the future (Smith & Denton, 2005).

4.4. The Fifth Research Question

In cases where spirituality and religiosity are employed as positive coping strategies, where God is perceived to be loving and forgiving, where beliefs are strong and a source of strength, and where religiosity provides a sense of meaning and coherence, the empirical evidence is highly suggestive of an association between religiosity/spirituality and improved mental health, (Baetz & Toews, 2009; Koenig, 2009; Pargament, 2002a, 2002b). A focus for the current study was to discover which aspects of mental health out of psychological well-being, anxiety and depression were associated with and could be predicted by a measure of religious commitment and a measure of spirituality. The fifth research question examines the following:

Does faith identity and religious/spiritual affiliation and commitment predict mental health over and above religious motivation, social connectedness, and demographic factors?

Chapter 5. The Present Study

5.1. Summary of the Previous Chapters

The previous chapters have attempted to describe the conceptual and theoretical framework in which this present study is positioned. First, the social and historical context of this study is situated in New Zealand, a country with a rich religious and spiritual history seen in the cultures of both New Zealand Māori and European settlers. However, like many western countries, New Zealand is a liberal, secular nation (Griffiths, 2011) in which the number of citizens who profess to have no religion is growing as the total population increases. The four main denominations (Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist) have seen significant decreases in membership over the past 50 years, while certain other denominations, such as evangelical churches, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Māori denominations have increased in membership. As immigration continues to occur, there has been a significant increase of other faith traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism (Hoverd, 2008).

Second, one of the great challenges in studying this topic is the difficulty in defining the terms 'spirituality' and 'religiosity', both for conceptual clarity and in order to create reliable and valid measures. In recent years there has been the tendency to distinguish the two terms by defining spirituality as experiential, authentic and personal, and religiosity as institutional and liturgical (Benson et al., 2003b; Good & Willoughby, 2006). Pargament (1996; 1999; 2005) argued that both terms pertain to the search for the sacred, however they each tap into different aspects of the search. Therefore, I have understood spirituality to refer to the ways in which people sanctify the things they most value in life (Pargament et al., 2005), including their relationship to God or a Higher Being, such as prayer and spiritual coping. I have understood religiosity to refer to specific affiliative behaviours that support young peoples' relationship to the sacred, such as committing to a particular faith tradition, and participating in a religious community.

Along with the challenge of defining what is meant by spirituality and religion, there are many ways to study spiritual development. Spiritual development incorporates the changes in the ways that young people and adults understand and relate to the sacred in their lives (Fowler, 1981, 1984). How this is to be understood and conceptualised in the lives of young people requires further research – both qualitative and quantitative. Approaches to spiritual development need to balance stage-like generalisations compared with individual differences (Keller & Streib, 2013). However, most researchers in this field are part of a

tradition in which it is assumed that regardless of religious or non-religious affiliation, faith, the search for the sacred, and questions concerning ultimate reality appear to be universal human concerns (Benson, Scales, Syvertsen, & Roehlkepartain, 2012; Fowler & Dell, 2006; Keller & Streib, 2013; Pargament et al., 2005).

Development in the domain of faith and spirituality has been understood as the drawing together of an identity, and part of the overall psychosocial development of an individual (Erikson, 1968; Fowler, 1981; Keisling & Sorrel, 2009; Leak, 2009; Markstrom-Adams & Smith, 1996). Marcia's (1966, 1967) theory of identity statuses may be a useful way to conceptualise exploration and commitment within the religious or spiritual domain. Individuals with a diffused faith identity are those who are disengaged from exploring spiritual matters, or making any commitments, however they may also experience heightened levels of religious doubt. Young people with a foreclosed faith identity may be those who are high in religious commitment, but have not explored other beliefs and ideas. They tend to have the lowest levels of doubt and score highly on authoritarianism (Hunsberger et al., 2001). Individuals with a moratorium faith identity are those who are high in exploration, but low in commitment. Some researchers have noted that their spirituality is less conventional than the other statuses, but may be higher in maturity (as measured by the researchers) (Kiesling et al., 2006). Finally, those with an achieved faith identity have engaged in exploration and questioning and have arrived at a firm commitment (Kiesling & Sorell, 2009; Leak, 2009). In the present study, levels of spiritual and religious exploration and commitment were measured as individual difference metrics in each of Marcia's four identity domains (diffusion, foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved). Hence participants were not categorised into a single identity category.

There are several predictors that research suggests contribute to youth spirituality and religiosity. According to findings from America, religiosity of significant others may be one of the strongest predictors, however, feeling satisfied with these relationships is also associated with religious commitment (Denton, 2012; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009). Other important predictors are religious socialisation as a child, early religious commitment and participation, the existence of supportive adults in one's religious community, and experiencing few doubts (Regnerus, Smith & Smith, 2004; Smith & Snell, 2009). Certain demographic factors may be associated with religiosity and spirituality, such as being female, socioeconomic status, and age.

Various aspects of religiosity and spirituality have been shown to influence mental health. Types of religious coping and appraisal may be associated with self-esteem and

depression (Koenig, 2009; Pargament, 1996). Spirituality and religiosity can be a resource for reducing anxiety, or can provoke it depending on whether it encourages guilt and rumination versus mindfulness and security in a relationship with the divine (Peterman, LaBelle, & Steinberg, 2014). Some studies have found that strength of religious belief versus doubting may be associated with depression and anxiety. Doubt may threaten one's sense of meaning which religion and spirituality often provide (Ellison, 1991), and the provision of a sense of meaning may also explain positive associations between religiosity or spirituality and mental health (Youniss et al., 1999). Finally, receiving positive social support from religious family members, or members of one's church has been found to be associated with the alleviation of depression (Pearce, Little, & Perez, 2003).

5.2. Re-visiting the Focus & Importance of this Thesis

Searching the literature has revealed very few published studies concerning New Zealand youth and spirituality. Some examples of the few include research that has found that religious affiliation has tended to increase positive coping in students who have immigrated to New Zealand for tertiary study (Hsien-Chuan Hsu, Krageloh, Shepherd, & Billington, 2009). One study of Muslim students found that they had fewer psychological symptoms and slightly higher life satisfaction than their Māori, Pacific Island and Pākehā peers (Ward, Liu, Fairbairn-Dunlop, & Henderson, 2010). However, this study was clearly comparing ethnic identities, because they did not measure the religious practices or affiliations of the other groups of adolescents to whom they were comparing the Muslim students. Another study reported that consistent practice of religion was a significant predictor of sexual abstinence at age 21 (Paul, Fitzjohn, Eberhart-Phillips, Herbison, & Dickson, 2000).

According to Mason Durie (1994; 2001), human well-being is comprised of four dimensions: the physical, the social, the psychological and the spiritual. He draws on the metaphor of a house with four walls, where each wall is required for the structure to be complete (Durie, 1994). However, psychology in New Zealand (and other western countries) has neglected spirituality in both research and clinical practice. My broad goal for the present study is to examine this fourth wall of well-being that is generally ignored, particularly in adolescents and young adults. Then, taking a developmental perspective with a focus on faith identity, I intend to examine the intrapsychic and contextual predictors of religiosity/spirituality and how these are linked with three aspects of mental health (psychological well-being, depression, and anxiety). With regard to Durie's model, the focus

of the present study is on spirituality and its associations with two other walls of the house: the social and psychological.

5.3. Re-visiting the Research Questions

This is a mixed-methods, cross-sectional study which has been designed to examine the following questions:

1. Do young people distinguish between “religiosity” and “spirituality”? If so, in what ways?
2. What factors do young adults perceive as influencing the development of their faith and spirituality?
3. How are faith identity factors associated with measures of religious motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), social connectedness (parental and peer attachment, community connectedness, and religiosity in the microsystem), demographic factors (gender, socioeconomic status, and age), and mental health (psychological well-being, anxiety, and depression)?
4. Does faith identity predict spiritual and religious affiliation and commitment over and above religious motivation, social connectedness, and demographic factors?
5. Does faith identity and religious/spiritual affiliation and commitment predict mental health over and above religious motivation, social connectedness, and demographic factors?

While these questions have been developed from considering the research and theories in the field, the ways that these were addressed in the methodology were in a different order. The last three questions were addressed first through using a quantitative design, while the first two were addressed through a qualitative design derived from the quantitative framework. The first two questions were examined by employing thematic analysis and qualitative description on twelve structured interviews (an embedded sample), while the latter three questions were examined through correlational and regression analyses from quantitative measures. The methodology rationale (see the following chapter) explains the full details of the study design, the epistemological basis, and the rationale for using both quantitative and qualitative elements. Following the methodology rationale will be the quantitative methodology, analytic approach, and presentation of the results that address the third, fourth and fifth research questions. The qualitative methodology and results will address the first and second research questions and follows on from the quantitative results.

Finally the discussion will address both sets of data to discuss the main findings in relation to the research questions and the theoretical and methodological issues raised.

Chapter 6: METHODOLOGY I
METHODOLOGY RATIONALE & RECRUITMENT

The design of this study is that of an exploratory, non-experimental, embedded design in which a quantitative framework has informed the qualitative. According to Creswell and Clark (2011), an embedded design is useful where the researcher discerns that a quantitative approach alone will not adequately answer the research questions. My approach also shows similarities with a convergent design, however, as Creswell and Clark (2011) point out, an important distinction between the two is that a convergent design uses both methods with equal weighting to discuss one central question. An embedded design, on the other hand, utilises the differences in quantitative and qualitative methods to answer different or secondary questions (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In this study the research questions complement each other, but require different approaches to answer them.

Creswell and Clark (2011) recommend that a quantitatively-dominant embedded design should be based on a post-positive paradigm in which it is assumed that this research is investigating a phenomenon in the real world, and that reality exists objectively. However, such a paradigm does not assume that we can have an objective or perfect understanding of reality. This is an appropriate approach in the study of religion and spirituality. According to Pargament, Magyar-Russell, and Murray-Swank (2005), the most defining characteristic of spirituality and religion is their relation to the sacred or transcendent. The nature and existence of the sacred is not accessible to scientific enquiry; however, what we can gain an understanding of is the relationship that people have to the sacred. We can enquire into the ways in which people behave, perceive and make decisions in regard to what they believe to be sacred (Stark & Finke, 2000).

While it may be impossible to gain knowledge about the nature or objective existence of God or the sacred through empirical research, this is a topic for understanding the ways in which individuals and populations construct phenomena about the sacred, and in addition, the ways in which they interact with these constructions. The quantitative component contributed empirical evidence for the degree of associations between variables, while the qualitative component provided a deeper perspective of how these participants constructed spirituality and religion and its meaning in their lives.

It is possible that some people might feel that a quantitative study is reductionist to topics that are considered irreducible. One participant who “completed” the quantitative survey will be considered an outlier, because he wrote in every textbox, “my faith is not a

statistic”. It seems that this person was protesting this very issue. How could I propose to measure matters of faith with numbers and statistics? How could I express something so personal and experiential with numerical signifiers? This perspective has also emerged in several conversations with people from a variety of worldviews, and is a critique that I have considered throughout the research process. This is yet another reason why I chose to carry out a mixed methods study.

In order to answer the research questions, it was decided that qualitative description was the most fitting framework for the qualitative component rather than employing phenomenology, discourse analysis, or grounded theory (Sandelowski, 2000). Collecting and assessing the qualitative data was both inductive and exploratory with the purpose of describing the findings in a way that matched the language used by the participants, rather than imposing any additional interpretive layers on the data as is common in phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory.

There was some cross-over with other methodologies, for example, as with phenomenology, I collected my data under the assumption that my participants’ words spoke for themselves (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Another similarity with phenomenology was my sampling strategy. In phenomenology, the aim of the researcher is to discover the core components of a phenomenon, therefore sample selection is based on experience with the phenomenon, rather than high numbers or diversity (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). For this project I selected my interviewees based on certain criteria, including their experience with the phenomenon under study: spirituality and religiosity.

My methods of coding differed from what is commonly practiced in phenomenology in that the final aim of my analysis was to develop a set of themes that would describe my findings. In phenomenology, the researcher uses the data to create a story about the experience of the phenomenon (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). My coding method was similar to grounded theory in that I used a system of comparing and categorising. However, I did not specifically focus on relationships between the categories I created, and did not attempt to construct a theory.

Finally, the feature of my qualitative methodology that differed most from phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory was its purpose. As previously mentioned, the objective of a phenomenological study is to create a story about a particular experience that the participants have in common, while the goal of grounded theory is to construct a theory from the findings. The goal of discourse analysis is to use the participants’ narratives in conjunction with other texts in order to discover the ways in which people use

language (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). For this study, the primary goals of obtaining the qualitative data were (a) for the data to provide a complementary perspective to the quantitative component of the study, (b) to explore the ways that a group of young adults defined and distinguished the similarities and differences between religion and spirituality, and (c) to discover characteristics of the participants' subjective recollections of their spiritual experiences and religious practices that they perceived to have a significant impact on the development of their faith.

6.1. Ethical Considerations

This project was reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. The survey data and interview data included separate information sheets and consent forms. Nevertheless, the following elements were considered for both parts of the participants' activities.

1. Respecting choice: All information sheets communicated to the participants that it was their choice to take part in the study, and there was no obligation to complete the questionnaire or interview once they had begun. They were also advised that should they wish to withdraw their data from the study, they were able to do so up until the start date of data analysis. This gave them several months to consider whether or not they wanted their data to be counted.

At the beginning of each interview, participants were reminded that they could decline answering any of the questions, and terminate the interview at any time with no questions asked. In addition, I communicated to them that they were free to express any views they wished, and that what they said would only be heard and transcribed by myself. See Appendix E for the invitation to take part in the interview, and Appendix F for the pre-interview information that was conveyed to the participants.

2. Respecting culture: This study was open to all ethnicities, as long as the participants were currently living in New Zealand. This meant that it was important to have an awareness of Māori understandings of spirituality, and also gain approval from the Māori Research Advisory Group at the University of Canterbury.

3. Ensuring confidentiality: In order to acknowledge their consent, participants were required to provide an email address or phone number, rather than their full name. The purpose of this was so that the researcher would be able to contact those who chose to take part in the interview. Those who gave their consent to be contacted about the interview were also asked

to give a first name. For the interviewees, confidentiality was ensured by giving each of them a pseudonym, and in addition, all data and transcripts were kept in a secure place.

4. Providing adequate and accurate information: The information sheet (see Appendix B) provided a summary of the study, the research aims, what the data would be used for and who the researchers were. In addition, the participants were informed about their rights during the research process, and who to contact if any of the topics covered in the survey aroused any troubling personal issues or emotions.

6.2 Recruitment

Recruitment efforts were as follows:

1. Branding and Online promotion

I created a brand for the study which was iFaith. A logo was designed and used in all advertising strategies, and a webpage with the iFaith logo was the main site for information to both participants and those who would be interested in helping to recruit participants (see Appendix D). This webpage was promoted on flyers that were posted on notice boards throughout the university's two campuses.

The webpage was also advertised on Facebook, by churches and youth ministries, and by Youth Line. Over a quarter of participants reported that they heard about the study via Facebook.

2. In-person promotion by the researcher:

I emailed a variety of clubs affiliated with the University of Canterbury – both religious and non-religious – before and during the summer period. At the beginning of the year I attended clubs day on both campuses. The strategy for recruitment was firstly to approach the club stalls and ask to place a flyer on their table. The religious groups tended to be more willing to do so, including the Muslim and Meditation Societies, but many non-religious clubs acquiesced. Secondly, I also walked the grounds approaching students to invite their participation and hand them pocket-sized cards with the survey web link printed on them.

A considerable number of participants were recruited from a 100-level education paper. At the end of a tutorial, I briefly promoted the study (with an emphasis that participation was completely independent from course requirements).

In order to try and obtain denominational diversity, I emailed a variety of churches and youth ministries. This involved talking to the University Chaplain and being invited to

speak at his church, visiting the Catholic Youth Team in Christchurch, and discussing the study with the head of Presbyterian youth ministries in Wellington. I was able to obtain invitations to speak at two Pentecostal churches, one Anglican church, and two young adults' events at a local Baptist church. Several Presbyterian and Anglican churches were also willing to place advertisements in their printed notices and Facebook pages. These in-person visits to churches and youth events raised a degree of awareness and interest about the study, but only a small number committed to completing the survey.

3. Email and phone correspondence

I sent out emails to a variety of youth trusts throughout New Zealand, although admittedly, there were few replies. In an effort to increase religious diversity (it was becoming clear that most participants were Pākehā Christians) I called one of the Buddhist societies in Christchurch. The person I spoke with directed me to the campus meditation society. I asked permission, and was able to promote the study in a meditation class. Unfortunately, the majority of attendees were New Zealand European, were not Buddhist, and also seemed to be unfamiliar with meditation practices.

A member of the Baha'i faith showed an interest in the study and promoted it to various parents of young adults in her religious community. This yielded a single participant.

4. Second-hand recruitment via youth leaders and friends

Youth leaders and friends were extremely successful at promoting the study. Thirty-three percent of the participants reported having been told about the study by a friend or youth leader. Generally, these were youth workers who were associated with churches who were involved with giving pastoral support and mentoring to young adults. Friends were often those who had already completed the questionnaire and recommended it to their friends.

In summary, an array of methods were used to recruit participants. It seems the use of social media, and personal recommendations from youth workers and participants' friends were the most effective means of gaining participants, which highlights why the sample was not representative of the religious diversity that currently exists in New Zealand.

The quantitative and qualitative components are presented separately. The quantitative methodology and results are presented in the next two chapters, followed by the qualitative methodology and results.

Chapter 7. QUANTITATIVE METHODS

7.1. Participants

A total of 153 responded to the survey, with 102 who actually completed all sections. After a process of data cleaning, 87 (85.3%) participants remained who had both completed the questionnaire with what seemed to be authentic data (e.g., several participants simply indicated “very true” or “not true” for the entirety of the questionnaire or had high frequencies of missing data. These responses were removed from the analyses). Table 2 shows the demographic details, including gender, age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and frequency of church service attendance for the final sample. A few participants did not complete every demographic measure, therefore the numbers do not always add to 87.

Table 2. Demographics of Survey Participants

	N (Total = 87)	Percent %
Age		
16	6	6.9
17	8	9.2
18	23	26.4
19	23	26.4
20	14	16.1
21	13	14.9
Gender		
F	62	71.3
M	25	28.7
Ethnicity		
NZ/Euro	66	75.9
Māori/Part Māori	3	3.4
Pacific Islands	2	2.3
Australian	2	2.4
Other	9	10.3
Unknown	3	3.4

Region		
Christchurch	63	77.8
Auckland	7	8.6
Wellington	2	2.5
Hamilton	4	4.9
Dunedin	2	2.5
Nelson	3	3.7
Mother in Paid Employment		
Yes	67	77.9
No	19	22.1
Father in Paid Employment		
Yes	77	88.5
No	10	11.5
SES (Function of combined parental occupation score) (Davis, McLeod, Ransom, & Ongley, 1997)		
Upper level executive/professional (5)	55	64.7
Middle manager/lower status professional (4)	14	16.5
Skilled labour (3)	11	12.9
Partly skilled/unskilled labour/unemployed (1)	5	5.9

Religious Affiliation		
Catholic	8	9.2
Anglican	7	8.0
Christian (Other or denomination unknown)	66	75.9
Other Religion or Spiritual Affiliation	6	6.9
Religious Service Attendance		
Once a week or more	70	80.5
Once a fortnight	3	3.4
At least monthly	4	4.6
Only occasionally	7	8.0
Never	3	3.4
Youth Group or Similar		
Once a week or more	44	50.6
Once a fortnight	10	11.5
At least monthly	5	5.7
Only occasionally	10	11.5
Never	18	20.7

As displayed in Table 2, the demographics of the participants do not reflect a high degree of diversity. Nearly eighty percent of the participants were New Zealand European, and nearly seventy-eight percent resided in Christchurch. Ninety-three percent of the sample identified themselves with one of the Christian faiths. It is possible that there could have been a greater diversity of Christian denominations than what is represented in Table 2, as a substantial percentage did not provide information regarding denominational affiliation. There were small numbers of those who expressed that they were Pentecostal, Presbyterian and Baptist. These were placed in the category of Christian Miscellaneous due to the small

numbers. Only seven percent of the participants were of another religion, which included personal spirituality, the Baha'i Faith, and Zen Buddhism.

On average the sample represented those who were regular attenders of church services, with just over eighty percent of those attendees reporting a frequency of once a week or more. Half of the group reported the same frequency of youth group attendance. This number is less than for church, mass, or other religious gatherings, because over half of the participants were over 18, and therefore too old to attend a high school youth group, unless participating as a youth leader.

7.2. Survey Procedure

The questionnaire was open to the public via a web-link, so that potential participants could access it in their own time (See Appendix A for the web-link address). After reading the study information and consent form, they were asked to provide an email address or phone number. They were then able to work through the questionnaire. At the conclusion, the invitation to take part in a phone interview was displayed, with a link to more information and another consent process (see Appendix E). It was clearly stated that only a small number of participants would be contacted for the interviews, therefore there was a chance that their participation would not be necessary. They were thanked for their willingness to participate. Those who did not wish to be contacted about the interview were able to exit the questionnaire.

7.3. Description of Materials

This study utilized a web-based questionnaire that was hosted by the University of Canterbury's Qualtrics survey system (see Appendix C). The questionnaire included a series of Likert based measures collated and/or adapted from current measures found in the literature, and a short series of open-ended questions. The questionnaire began with the open-ended items which queried participants for their own definitions of religion and spirituality as a prime, then moved to the quantitative scales. The quantitative measures included a total of 84 items (excluding demographic items) which corresponded to fourteen composite variables. All items were scored using a four point ordinal scale, with the options, "Very True" (4), "Often True" (3), "Slightly True" (2), and "Not True" (1).

In order to establish the factor structure of the various sections of the measure, Principle Components Analyses with Varimax rotation were performed. Components with

Eigen values above 1.0 were accepted as factors, in accordance with Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011). They postulate that components with Eigen values of less than 1.0 are obsolete because they account for less than the variability that is explained by a single factor.

Composite variables were created in SPSS by averaging together those items from the relevant scales which also showed acceptable internal consistency reliability, and for which the principle components analyses suggested were composed of a single factor, and taking the overall mean score of these items. These preliminary analyses also led to the deletion of items that did not add to reliability, or which the principle components analyses suggested did not fit into the scale. Hence, the full questionnaire (see Appendix C) contains a greater number of items than were used in the final data analyses. PCA was not required for the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, since it is already a validated measure (Amsden & Greenberg, 1987).

7.4. Development of Measures

7.4.1 Outcome Measures

Spirituality and Religiosity

Similar to Zinnbauer et al (1997), participants were invited to begin the questionnaire by providing their own definitions for “spirituality” and “religion/religiosity” as a way of priming their thinking about this topic. The instructions were, “Before getting started, we ask that you write your own brief definitions for what these words mean for you – “spirituality” and “religion/religiosity”. This part of the measure relates to the fourth research question: do young people distinguish between “religion” and “spirituality”?

Religiosity was quantitatively measured via three items that assessed religious salience and commitment. This measure was kept simple due to the possibility of shared variance with spirituality, and reasons for church attendance. In a meta-analysis, Dehaan, Yonker and Affolter (2011) identified that the most common ways in the literature for measuring religiosity were (a) frequency of religious service attendance, (b) religious behaviour, such as personal prayer or participation in church related activities, (c) salience, such as its importance in one’s daily life or in making decisions, and (d) questioning, which included engaging with one’s doubts and questions about faith and religion (Desmond et al., 2010; Hunsberger et al., 2001; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009). However, in an early study by Zinnbauer and colleagues’ (1997) they found the questioning items substantially reduced the internal consistency reliability of the measure. Hence, they

removed those items from their scale. One of the items for the measure used in this study was derived from the National Study of Youth and Religion (Smith & Denton, 2005). The three specific items used in the current study included: “I consider myself to be a religious person”, “I have made firm commitments regarding my faith”, and “Maintaining my faith is important to me”. These items assess the salience aspect of religiosity. The reason that other domains were not included in this particular measure is that a separate section of the questionnaire asked participants about their frequency of religious service attendance and reasons for attending (see intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for church attendance). The reason that frequency of prayer was not included in this measure was that this item fitted well with the spirituality measure according to a principle components analysis (see below). Including it in the religiosity measure would mean a conceptual overlap, and also its inclusion did not significantly alter the internal consistency reliability. Internal consistency reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .70$; corrected item-total correlations ranged from .40 to .63).

Spirituality was measured via seven items that can be conceptually separated into two aspects: spiritual salience and spiritual coping. Two items (one salience item and one coping item) were derived from the Spiritual Transcendence Index (STI) (Seidlitz et al., 2002). The other items were generated from reading the literature about how spirituality might operate in someone’s life, and common ways it is measured (DeHaan et al., 2011; Koenig, 2008; Moberg, 2002). The spiritual salience items included: “I consider myself to be a spiritual person”, “I feel connected to a Higher Power/Being/God/power within myself”, “My spirituality is an important part of my day to day life”, and “Personal prayer is an important part of my life”. The spiritual coping items included: “My spirituality helps me to cope with stress”, “My spirituality helps me to understand life’s purpose”, and “My spirituality helps me to experience peace, even when I am going through a difficult time”. A principle components analysis showed that the items strongly loaded on one factor (Eigen value = 4.9, with all other items less than 1.0), in spite of the conceptual distinction between salience and coping. Furthermore, this measure had excellent internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .93$).

Psychological Well-being

A custom measure of psychological well-being was used in this study, employing items common to other measures of well-being (Ciarrochi & Bilich, 2006), self-esteem (Robins, Hedin, & Trzesniewski, 2001), and hope (Snyder, 1991, 2000). The measure consisted of 8 items. One of the hope/existential items were derived from the National Study of Youth and Religion (Smith & Denton, 2005), whilst the other two were adapted from

Snyder's (1991, 2000) hope theory. In addition, three items were adapted from the RSES, one from the BDI. The specific items were, "I feel confident about my skills and abilities", "I feel capable of achieving my goals", "I feel positive about the future", "I feel that my life has a purpose", "I like to think about and make plans for the future", "I usually feel positive about who I am", "On the whole, I think I am a worthwhile person", and "I get a lot of pleasure from the things that I enjoy doing". Principal components analysis showed that these items loaded on a single factor (Eigen value = 4.18, all other items were less than 1.0) that accounted for 52.24% of the total variance. This scale had excellent internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .86$, corrected item-total correlations ranging from $r = .58$ to $.72$).

Anxiety

For anxiety, four items were derived and adapted from the Penn State Worry Questionnaire (PSW-Q) (Meyer, Miller, Metzger, & Borkovec, 1990), which tapped into the participants tendency to worry, or experience anxiety. These items included, "I don't tend to worry about things" (reverse coded), "Once I start worrying, I can't stop", "As soon as I finish a task I start worrying about everything else I have to do", and "I notice that I have been feeling more anxious lately". A principle components analysis revealed that these items loaded onto one factor (Eigen value = 2.29, with all other items less than 1.0) which explained 57.3% of the variance. The measure also had good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .75$, corrected item-total correlations ranged from $r = .47$ to $r = .62$).

Depression

To measure depressive symptoms, three items were taken from the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, Steer, & Garbin, 1988). and two items were taken from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) (Ciarrochi & Bilich, 2006) and National Study of Youth and Religion (Smith & Denton, 2005). The items included, "I feel sad a lot of the time", "I struggle to enjoy life as much as I used to", "I cry more often than I used to", "I feel useless a lot of the time", and "Life feels meaningless". A principle components analysis revealed that all of these items loaded on a single factor (Eigen value = 2.75, with all other items less than 1.0) which explained 55.1% of the variance. This measure had a good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .79$, corrected item correlations ranged from $r = .45$ to $r = .69$).

7.4.2. Predictors

Identity

The identity items were adapted from the Objective Measure of Identity Status (OMIES) (Adams, 1998). The OMIES was designed to measure and categorise participants into Marcia's four identity statuses, by assessing commitment and exploration in the ideological, relational and vocational domains. Therefore, it was designed to measure global identity. According to Marcia's theory, the current study measured identity in just one domain: the ideological, and specifically, religion and spirituality. In order to have two items indicating each of the four statuses, the items that were selected from the OMIES were reworded slightly so that they referred to matters of religion or spirituality as opposed to the other domains of identity such as friendship or occupation. While the OMIES is a categorical measure, I measured each status on an ordinal scale to capture individual differences across the four status variables separately. This had the advantage of maintaining cohesion with the other scales, and did not lower statistical power, which would have happened if I had created categorical distinctions across the four identity types. Theoretically, this may seem problematic because an individual could potentially score highly on all four statuses. However, this is conceptually unlikely, and according to the correlations and factor analyses, it did not occur.

Although the OMEIS is an established measure, a principle components analysis was employed in order to test that my adaptations did not change the factor structure. The principle components analysis, using Varimax rotation revealed that all items loaded onto four factors (> 1.0 in accordance with Kaiser criterion) as expected (Eigen values: factor 1 = 2.75, factor 2 = 1.70, factor 3 = 1.31, factor 4 = 1.06), and cumulatively accounted for 85.2% of the variance. The rotated factor solution showed very high factor loadings (all were $> .85$), with two status items per factor. There was very little cross-loading. The correlations between each status item pair were large and significant, which showed a high reliability within each factor.

Diffusion included: "When it comes to matters of faith, I just haven't found anything that appeals to me. I don't really feel the need to look", and "The topics of religion or spirituality don't interest me. I'm not fussed one way or the other" ($r = .75$).

Foreclosure included: "My views about faith/spirituality are very similar to those of my parents. I'm not really interested in questioning those views", and "My participation/non-participation in religious/spiritual practices/activities (such as church attendance, prayer or meditation) are the same as my parents/caregivers. I've never really questioned why" ($r = .73$).

Moratorium included: “I’m not really sure who God is for me. I’d like to make up my mind, but I haven’t finished searching yet”, and “I feel confused about what I believe right now. I keep changing my views about what is right and wrong” ($r = .62$).

Finally, Achievement included: “I’ve gone through a time of serious questions about my faith/spirituality, and now I can say that I mostly know what I believe (even if I don’t understand everything)”, and “I have considered and re-considered what I believe, and now I think I know where I stand with faith and spirituality” ($r = .66$).

Church Intrinsic/Extrinsic Reasons for Religious Involvement

Reasons for church attendance was derived from Allport’s theory that religion (and arguably, spirituality) can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985). Frequency of religious attendance is commonly included in measures of religiosity, however few researchers have examined the effects of motivation for doing so. The concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was applied to church participation in order to see what effect reasons for participation might have on the other variables. People have different reasons for attending religious services, and it is possible to attend for reasons other than one’s religious or spiritual commitments. The questionnaire included eleven items, with principle components analysis revealing two factors (according to Kaiser Criterion with Eigen values > 1.0). The first factor contained six items (Eigen value = 5.0) and the second, five items (Eigen value = 1.70). Together they accounted for 60.9% of the variance.

The loadings of the items in the rotated solution (Varimax rotation) were congruent with theories about intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation (Allport & Ross, 1967). All items loaded above .60 with minimal cross-loading, which more than meets the criteria for acceptance of factor loadings (Yong & Pearce, 2013). There were two items that did show some cross-loading $> .32$, however, they loaded on the other factor to a much higher degree. The items were, “It helps me not to feel alone in my faith” (factor 1 = .72, factor 2 = .32), and “I feel part of something bigger than myself” (factor 1 = .38, factor 2 = .70). These items were retained and added to the factors on which they had the highest loading. Six items for the first factor were labelled as the intrinsic items, whilst the five items for the second factor were labelled as the extrinsic items. Composites were created for each factor, and were labelled “intrinsic reasons for church attendance” and “extrinsic reasons for church attendance”.

The composite variable, intrinsic reasons for church included: “It’s important for my spiritual growth”, “It helps me not to feel alone in my faith”, “I have service/leadership

commitments”, “It helps with my understanding and knowledge of the scriptures”, “By going, I feel closer to God”, and “By going, I receive guidance for how I should live my life”. The Internal consistency reliability was high ($\alpha = .86$, corrected item-total correlations ranged from $r = .46$ to $r = .72$)

Extrinsic reasons for church attendance included: “Many of my friends attend”, “My leaders inspire me”, “I feel part of something bigger than myself”, “I enjoy catching up with people I know”, and “My leaders are cool”. Internal consistency reliability was also high for this variable ($\alpha = .83$, corrected item correlations range from $r = .59$ to $r = .67$).

Community

The measure for connectedness to community was generated from the findings of a study that was conducted by Whitlock (2004), in which she assessed the attitudes of high school adolescents to their schools and communities. One of the significant findings was that the majority of adolescents felt more connected to their schools when adults communicated a sense of respect and value for the young person, encouraged their contributions, and listened to their opinions. Hence, several of the community items tapped into this idea of the young person feeling valued for their contribution, and feeling listened to. From the NSYR (Smith & Denton, 2005), one item was used that asked about whether the young person felt supported by adults outside of their immediate family. The specific item was, “There are adults outside of my immediate family who would be willing to help me if I needed it.”

The other seven items of this measure were: “There are older adults in my community who care about what I have to say”, “I have some close friends within my community”, “My community makes me feel valued and accepted”, “My community encourages my faith/spiritual growth”, “We help each other out”, “I trust most of the people in my community”, and lastly, a reverse-coded item: “I don’t really feel a part of my community”. Fewer participants completed this measure due to there being an opt-out option if they did not feel connected to a specific community beyond their immediate family ($n = 12$). A principle components analysis revealed two factors with Eigen values higher than 1.0 and accounted for 63.1% of the variance (first factor Eigen value = 4.0, second factor Eigen value = 1.1). However, the two factors were highly correlated ($r = .64$) and this, in addition to the high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .85$) was considered adequate cause to keep it as one measure

Attachment to Parents and Peers

Nineteen items were employed from the Inventory of Attachment to Parents and Peers (IPPA) (Amsden & Greenberg, 1987). These items measured the extent to which one trusts, feels understood and supported by their parents and peers. Previous studies have found the mother and father subscales to have very high reliability ($\alpha = .94$ for both), and the peer subscale to have lower reliability ($\alpha = .48$) (Patterson, Pryor, & Field, 1994). The measure as a whole has robust convergent validity (Amsden & Greenberg, 1987). Sample items include, “I trust my father”, “I tell my mother about my problems and troubles”, “my father trusts my judgement”, and “I trust my friends”. In the current study, internal consistency reliability was tested on the mother, father and peer items together, and showed excellent reliability ($\alpha = .92$).

Religiosity/Spirituality in the Microsystem

Researchers have discovered that the presence of a religious or spiritual affiliation in the microsystem has a greater impact on youth religiosity than factors such as attending a religious high school (Regnerus & Smith, 2005; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith et al., 2002). Based on their research, Smith and Denton (2005) and Smith and Snell (2009) argue that socialisation from parents tends to have the greatest influence, followed by that of peers. Seven items measured the extent to which the young people had parents or other family members with an active faith or religious practice, and the extent of religious or spiritual practice and openness of their friends. These items included “At least one of my parents/caregivers attends church/mass/mosque/synagogue”, “I would describe at least one of my parents/caregivers as having an active faith/spirituality”, “There are several members of my extended family who I would describe as having an active faith/spirituality”, “I can talk about religious/spiritual matters with some or all members of my family”, “I have family members who pray for me (privately or with me present)”, “A lot of my friends have an active faith/spirituality”, and “I have friends with whom I can discuss religious or spiritual matters”. A principle components analysis revealed two factors with Eigen values higher than 1.0, and accounted for 67.2% of the variance (first factor Eigen value = 3.32, and second factor Eigen value = 1.38). However, the internal consistency reliability of the measure was very high ($\alpha = .81$, with corrected item-total correlations ranging from .22 to .74), and this was considered an adequate reason to keep it as a single measure.

Demographics

Participants were asked to provide their age by checking a box (options from 16 through to 21) to the nearest year. Gender was measured as a dichotomous variable where male = 1 and female = 2. Text boxes were provided for the participants to report their ethnicity, religious/spiritual affiliation, and region of residence. Socioeconomic status was measured in two ways. Firstly they were asked if their mother and father were employed in paid work (yes = 1, No = 0). In addition, they were asked how they had heard about the iFaith study, and to enter the occupation of each of their parents or caregivers as a proxy for socioeconomic status. This proxy variable was computed by scoring both parental occupations according to the Statistics New Zealand guidelines (Davis, McLeod, Ransom & Ongley, 1997). A participant's SES score became the highest score between the two parents' occupations on a 5-point ordinal scale. The scoring was 5 = upper level executives and professionals, 4 = middle managers, small shopkeepers, and lower status professionals, 3 = skilled labour, divided into manual and non-manual, 2 = partly skilled labour, and 1 = unskilled manual labour.

7.4.3. Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was pilot tested on six young adults who were from a Christchurch church community affiliated with the Pentecostal New Life church association. They completed the survey, and provided feedback on the positive and negative aspects of the experience. Most of the feedback that they provided was positive, therefore very few changes were made. On one occasion the wording of two of the identity items caused confusion for one person. The young adult in question had applied a great deal of analysis to the questions. After I explained what was meant by the statements, she was satisfied that the wording should remain the same.

Another young person communicated that the ordering of the parent and peer attachment items was distracting. The items had originally been organised randomly, so as to minimise practice effects. Since this had the potential to be distracting, the items were arranged so that all the items corresponding with the target relationship were arranged together (i.e., mother, father, and friends, respectively).

7.5. Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were calculated to assess the general pattern of responding and distribution of the measures across the entire sample. Bivariate zero-order correlations were employed to assess the degree of association across all the measures in the study. Predictors

(faith identity variables, intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for church attendance, IPPA, community and religion in the microsystem) that showed significant bivariate associations with the outcome measures (religiosity, spirituality, psychological well-being, anxiety and depression) were included in multiple regression analyses to assess the net associations between key predictors and each outcome measure and the predictive utility of the overall models in explaining the variance of each outcome measure.

In the first analyses, separate hierarchical regression models examined the associations between the predictor variables and spirituality and religiosity. Depending on which variables were significantly associated with the outcome variable, demographic and identity variables were entered first, followed by intrinsic/extrinsic reasons for church attendance and the psychosocial variables (community, IPPA, and religiosity in the microsystem). In the next set of analyses examining the prediction of the mental health outcomes, demographic, faith identity and spirituality/religiosity were entered first, followed by intrinsic/extrinsic reasons for church attendance and the psychosocial variables (community, IPPA, and religiosity in the microsystem). This strategy had several advantages: firstly, it allowed the demographic variables to be controlled for from the beginning, secondly, it examined the joint association of spirituality/religiosity and faith identity in predicting mental health, and thirdly, the final model adds the covariates that might explain both the associations with identity, spirituality and religiosity, and mental health.

Frequency of church attendance was not included in the regression models due to multicollinearity issues with intrinsic reasons for church attendance. Although the bivariate associations show that church frequency was associated with several of the variables, there were similar associations between those variables and intrinsic reasons for church attendance. Further, the correlation between intrinsic reasons for church and church frequency was fairly high ($r = .63, p < .01$), which suggests that they share much of the same variance. Intrinsic reasons for church attendance was employed in the regression analyses because it had slightly stronger associations with the outcome variables than church frequency. However, frequency of attendance was included in the correlation matrix.

Finally, table 3 (below) shows that most of the variables do not fit the assumption of normality, which is considered to be an important criterion for regression analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Log transformations were performed on each of the variables, and both correlational and hierarchical regression analyses were repeated for the new transformed variables in the same way as for the untransformed. Comparing the results of the

transformed variables with the untransformed, revealed no significant differences. Therefore, the original (untransformed) variables were utilised in reporting the quantitative findings.

Chapter 8: RESULTS I

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

8.1. Preliminary Analyses

While the focus of this thesis is not explicitly about associations between demographic variables and religiosity/spirituality, nevertheless it is important to consider the possibility that some demographic variables could be important in these analyses. For example, research has shown that women are more likely to report higher religiosity and spirituality than men (Denton, Pearce, & Smith, 2008; Desmond et al., 2010; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith et al., 2002; Smith & Snell, 2009). In order to test for gender differences, three sets of multivariate analyses of variance were employed. The first analysis examined gender differences across the outcome variables, the second analysis assessed gender differences across the faith identity variables, and the third examined gender differences across intrinsic/extrinsic reasons for church attendance, frequency of church attendance, and the psychosocial variables. Across all the analyses only one gender difference was found. Women were rated significantly higher on foreclosure identity compared to men (mean difference = .44; $F = 4.89$, $p < .05$). However, foreclosure was not a significant predictor of any of the outcomes in the multiple regression analyses, therefore further exploration of interaction effects between gender and foreclosure were not pursued.

Besides gender, it is also important to consider the role of socioeconomic status and age. SES was examined in two ways. First mean comparisons examined group differences across participants with a mother or father in paid employment compared to those without a parent in paid employment, then correlations assessed associations between ordinal ratings of occupational classification and the study variables. There were no significant correlations with occupational classifications; however, the MANOVAs comparing participants with parents who were or were not in paid employment showed several significant differences across father employment status (there were no significant differences for mother employment status). The results showed that those whose fathers *were not* in paid employment ($N = 10$) were more likely to score higher in foreclosure (mean difference = .43, $F = 3.53$, $p = .06$). They were also more likely to report higher religiosity in the microsystem (mean difference = .45, $F = 5.62$, $p < .05$). Participants whose fathers *were* in paid employment ($N = 77$) were more likely to report higher religiosity and spirituality (religiosity mean difference = .58, $F = 5.90$, $p < .05$, spirituality mean difference = .67, $F = 6.92$, $p < .01$).

There were no group differences in mental health. Of the independent variables, participants whose fathers were in paid employment scored lower on diffusion (mean difference = .53, $F = 10.13$, $p < .01$) and moratorium identity (mean difference = .48, $F = 3.07$, $p = .08$), and scored higher on the IPPA (mean difference = .37, $F = 3.03$, $p = .09$), intrinsic reasons for church attendance (mean difference = .80, $F = 13.23$, $p < .001$), and extrinsic reasons for church attendance (mean difference = .46, $F = 3.12$, $p = .08$). Due to the fact that having a father in paid employment was significantly associated with many of the variables of interest in this study, this variable was controlled for in the regression models. However, it didn't feature as a significant predictor in any of the analyses.

The final demographic variable examined was participants' age. Bivariate correlations showed that participants who were older were more likely to rate themselves as higher in spirituality ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), and hold higher intrinsic reasons for church attendance ($r = .25$, $p < .05$) as well as extrinsic reasons for church attendance ($r = .23$, $p < .05$), and report slightly better relationship quality with parents and peers ($r = .31$, $p < .01$). Finally, age was negatively associated with moratorium ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$), older participants were more likely to report lower scores on moratorium faith identity. As a result of these analyses and the many significant associations between employment status, age, and the outcome variables these demographic variables were entered in the multiple regression analyses.

Table 3 contains the descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha or r for the identity variables that contained two items each) for the composite variables. The number of participants who completed each section of the questionnaire varied at times, and three of the composite variables contained less participants than the others. In these sections, the respondents had been instructed to skip to the next section if they felt that the current one was not applicable to them. The community variable had the fewest participants ($N = 75$).

The mean scores for a number of variables were towards the higher end of the scale, especially for spirituality and religious commitment, but also for psychological well-being and somewhat paradoxically also for depression and anxiety. The mean for identity achievement was also somewhat high in contrast to the other identity status variables which were the only variables below 2.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for church were towards the high end of the scale with extrinsic reasons showing slightly higher variability. This makes sense due to the fact that this population has a high frequency of church attendance.

Somewhat surprisingly, community had a higher mean than the IPPA. A paired-sample T-test examined the possibility of significant differences across these two variables for only those participants who completed both measures. The analysis showed that community was rated significantly higher than IPPA (M difference = .41; $t = 4.94$ (1, 74); $p < .001$), suggesting participants had a stronger sense of connection to their religious/spiritual communities than close relationships with parents and peers. Finally, within the full sample, religiosity within participants' microsystem was also fairly high.

Table 3. Alphas, Means and Standard Deviations for each Composite Variable

Variable Name	N	# Items	Mean (SD)	Min - Max	Cronbach's α or r
<i>Religious Commitment</i>	87	3	3.35 (.73)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .70$
<i>Spirituality</i>	87	7	3.26 (.78)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .93$
<i>Psychological Well-being</i>	87	8	2.86 (.51)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .86$
<i>Depression</i>	87	5	2.42 (.36)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .79$
<i>Anxiety</i>	87	4	2.37 (.78)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .75$
<i>Diffusion Identity</i>	87	2	1.18 (.52)	1 - 4	$r = .75$
<i>Foreclosure Identity</i>	87	2	1.78 (.87)	1 - 4	$r = .73$
<i>Moratorium Identity</i>	87	2	1.63 (.82)	1 - 4	$r = .62$
<i>Achievement Identity</i>	87	2	2.99 (.91)	1 - 4	$r = .66$
<i>Church Intrinsic Reasons</i>	85	6	3.20 (.69)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .86$
<i>Church Extrinsic Reasons</i>	86	5	3.00 (.77)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .83$
<i>Community</i>	75	8	3.43 (.54)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .85$
<i>IPPA</i>	87	19	3.03 (.64)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .92$
<i>Microsystem Religious</i>	87	11	3.14 (.75)	1 - 4	$\alpha = .81$

8.2. Bivariate Correlations

The relationships between each of the variables were assessed using Pearson zero-order bivariate correlation analyses. Table 4 displays the correlations. As expected, the correlation between religious commitment and spirituality was positive, significant and bordered strong, but it was not strong enough to warrant concern for multicollinearity. Religiosity was significantly associated with only three other variables and for each one of these; spirituality was also significantly associated. Higher ratings of religiosity and spirituality were significantly and moderately associated with less diffusion, less moratorium (although this association was rather small for religiosity), and moderately associated with higher intrinsic reasons for church attendance. Notably, religiosity was not associated with any of the mental health measures.

Spirituality was significantly associated with another six variables apart from religiosity. Increased spirituality was moderately associated with better psychological well-being, and slightly lower anxiety, but not associated with depression. In addition, increased spirituality was significantly associated with increased extrinsic reasons for church attendance, increased sense of community, better relationships with parents and peers, and a religiously oriented microsystem, with these associations in the small to moderate range.

Apart from the associations with spirituality, psychological well-being and anxiety were associated with many of the same variables, including a moderate, positive association with each other. Those who were higher in anxiety reported significantly lower psychological well-being. Somewhat surprisingly, depressive symptoms were not associated with psychological well-being or anxiety. However, all three mental health variables had small significant associations with community and IPPA. Both anxiety and psychological well-being were also associated with religiosity in the microsystem to a small extent. Participants who were low in depression and anxiety, and higher in psychological well-being felt more connected to their community and had better relationships with their parents and peers. Participants who reported greater frequency of church attendance as well as higher intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for doing so, tended to have higher psychological well-being. Also, those who reported higher psychological well-being also reported a small significant increase of religiosity in their microsystem.

Of the faith identity variables, moratorium was the only one associated with the mental health outcomes. Increased moratorium was significantly associated with lower psychological well-being and higher anxiety. It was somewhat surprising that there was a

small, positive correlation between diffusion and moratorium, given that diffusion is not conceptually related to moratorium. Diffusion involves a disengagement with the identity process, whilst moratorium involves exploration. Nevertheless, higher diffusion was significantly related to higher moratorium. Those who reported higher moratorium also reported significantly lower identity achievement. Diffusion and moratorium were both moderately and negatively associated with frequency of church attendance and intrinsic reasons for church, whilst moratorium was negatively associated (to a small extent) with extrinsic reasons for church attendance. Finally, participants who reported higher moratorium were significantly more likely to report lower quality relationships with parents and friends. Meanwhile, there were small, significant associations between foreclosure and intrinsic reasons for church participation, IPPA, and religion in the microsystem. Participants who tended towards foreclosure were more likely to report that their family and friends were religious, were more likely to feel more connected to their community, and were more likely to report higher intrinsic reasons for church participation. Somewhat surprisingly, apart from the association with moratorium, achieved faith identity was not significantly associated with any other variables.

Those who reported high intrinsic reasons for church attendance were significantly more likely to report a higher connection to their community, closer relationships with their parents and peers, greater religiosity in the microsystem, increased extrinsic reasons for church attendance, and greater frequency of church attendance. Frequency of church attendance was also mildly associated with some of the social variables, but not IPPA. Hence, those who reported higher frequency of attendance were more likely to report greater connection to their community and greater religiosity in the microsystem. Due to the high correlation between intrinsic reasons for church attendance and frequency of church attendance, and likely multicollinearity issues, frequency of church attendance was not included in the regression models alongside intrinsic reasons for church attendance. Finally, young people who reported better quality relationships with their parents and peers were significantly more likely to feel connected to their community and report that parents and friends in their microsystem shared their religious orientation.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>1. Religious Commitment</i>	1	.55**	.15	.17	-.10	-.66**	-.26*	.17	.19	.53**	.57**	.16	.22	.15	.14
<i>2. Spirituality</i>		1	.47**	.01	-.22*	-.41**	-.52**	.26*	.18	.48**	.68**	.36**	.36**	.30**	.26*
<i>3. Psychological Well-being</i>			1	.09	-.44**	-.11	-.51**	.14	.20	.22*	.26*	.28*	.27*	.46**	.23*
<i>4. Depression</i>				1	.07	-.04	-.03	.09	.12	.11	-.03	.12	-.35**	-.30**	-.07
<i>5. Anxiety</i>					1	.15	.37**	.10	-.60	.01	-.09	-.07	-.26*	-.35**	-.03
<i>6. Diffusion</i>						1	.29*	-.19	-.21	-.46**	-.45**	-.04	-.21	-.13	-.10
<i>7. Moratorium</i>							1	-.20	-.32**	-.30**	-.57**	-.28**	-.15	-.32**	-.16
<i>8. Foreclosure</i>								1	.01	.16	.27*	.14	.11	.28**	.46**
<i>9. Achievement</i>									1	.21	.12	-.09	-.02	-.01	-.01
<i>10. Frequency of Attendance</i>										1	.63**	.47**	.25*	.15	.30**
<i>11. Church Intrinsic Reasons</i>											1	.51**	.33**	.32**	.29**
<i>12. Church Extrinsic Reasons</i>												1	.21	.11	.14
<i>13. Community</i>													1	.31**	.15
<i>14. IPPA</i>														1	.56**
<i>15. Microsystem</i>															1

*p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01

8.3. Regression Analyses

A series of hierarchical regression analyses were performed in order to assess the predictors of each dependent variable. Due to the small sample size, only parsimonious models with those variables significantly associated with the outcome variable (according to the bivariate associations) were tested and included in the tables. This includes the demographic variables as well as the other predictor variables which included faith identity, reasons for church attendance, and the psychosocial variables. For instance, although community was significantly associated with spirituality, anxiety, and psychological well-being, performing the regression analyses revealed that it was only a significant predictor of depression. Models were progressively refined using backwards and forwards, inclusion and exclusion of predictors until a final model had been achieved. Once the predictive models for religiosity and spirituality had been achieved, these two variables were included as predictors in the mental health regression models.

For one of the models, a Sobel test of mediation was performed in order to test whether moratorium partially mediated the association between spirituality and anxiety. No other tests of mediation were performed due to the lack of theoretical development to support specific hypotheses about such patterns of association among these variables. Furthermore, all the variables on the models remained significant with the inclusion of the others, and lastly, as this is cross-sectional data, inferences from tests of mediation are very restricted (Cole & Maxwell, 2003).

8.3.1. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Religiosity

Table 5 displays the results for the hierarchical regression analysis for religious commitment. In step one, when the influence of father in paid employment was controlled for, diffusion was a very strong predictor of religiosity. In the second step, with the addition of intrinsic reasons for church attendance, the predictive power of diffusion decreased slightly, as evidenced by a decrease in the beta value. However, it remained as the strongest predictor, along with intrinsic reasons for church attendance. The first model predicted 45% of the variance in religiosity, suggesting a medium effect size according to Cohen's criteria (Ferguson, 2009). The second model was even stronger, and predicted 54% of the variance in religiosity. The change in R^2 was also significant, which further supports the interpretation that the second model was a better predictor of religiosity than the first. Thus, after

controlling for the employment status of fathers, religious commitment in this sample of young adults was best predicted by lower scores on faith diffusion and higher scores on intrinsic reasons for church attendance

Table 5. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Religious Commitment

Religious Commitment (N = 84)				
Predictors	B	S.E.	β	p
<i>Step 1</i>				
Father Paid Employment	.086	.187	.041	.646
Diffusion	-.971	.133	-.653	.000
R² = .45				
<i>Step 2</i>				
Father Paid Employment	-.077	.177	.037	.667
Diffusion	-.785	.131	-.528	.000
Church Intrinsic Reasons	.337	.085	.345	.000
R² = .54, F Change = 15.71 (1, 81), p = .000				

8.3.2. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Spirituality

Table 6 presents the regression analysis for the prediction of spirituality. When controlling for the influence of age and father in paid employment, both diffusion and moratorium were significant predictors of spirituality, with moratorium exerting a slightly stronger influence. In the second step, with the addition of intrinsic reasons for church attendance, the predictive power of the other variables decreased, although diffusion and moratorium remained as significant predictors. However, intrinsic reasons for church was the strongest predictor. The first model explained 42% of the variance in spirituality, while the second model was even stronger, and predicted 54% of the variance in spirituality (R² change was significant). Thus, somewhat similar to religiosity, when controlling for the employment status of fathers, and for age, participants who scored highly on spirituality were those who had low scores on faith diffusion and moratorium, and in addition, had high scores on intrinsic reasons for church attendance. Somewhat surprisingly, none of the other independent variables significantly associated with spirituality at the bivariate level featured as significant predictors in the multivariate analyses.

Table 6. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Spirituality

Spirituality (N = 84)				
Predictors	B	S.E.	β	p
<i>Step 1</i>				
Age	.074	.048	.135	.127
Father Paid Employment	.243	.218	.103	.269
Diffusion	-.459	.165	-.275	.007
Moratorium	-.368	.087	-.399	.000
R² = .42				
<i>Step 2</i>				
Age	.050	.043	.092	.251
Father Paid Employment	.021	.203	.009	.919
Diffusion	-.317	.152	-.190	.040
Moratorium	-.188	.088	-.203	.037
Church Intrinsic Reasons	.492	.112	.449	.007
R² = .54, F Change = 19.37 (1, 79), p = .000				

In the following two regression analyses, the outcome variables of religiosity and spirituality were entered as predictors of the mental health outcomes of psychological well-being and anxiety. None of the demographic variables were significantly associated with the mental health variables, therefore they were not included in the regression models.

8.3.3. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Psychological Well-being

Table 7 displays the regression analysis for the prediction of psychological well-being. When moratorium and spirituality were entered in the first step of the model, both of the associations decreased compared to their bivariate associations, but remained significant. Similarly, when IPPA was added in step two, all three associations decreased from their respective bivariate associations, however, all three remained significant. This suggests that all three variables significantly and independently predicted psychological well-being. In terms of effect size, the first model predicted 32% of the variance in psychological well-

being. The second model was slightly but significantly stronger, and predicted 39% of the variance.

Table 7. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-being

Psychological Well-being (N = 86)				
Predictors	B	S.E.	β	p
<i>Step 1</i>				
Moratorium	-.225	.066	-.361	.001
Spirituality	.188	.069	.285	.008
R² = .32				
<i>Step 2</i>				
Moratorium	-.186	.064	-.297	.005
Spirituality	-.152	.067	-.231	.026
IPPA	.233	.073	.291	.002
R² = .39, F Change = 10.12 (1, 83), p = .002				

8.4.4. Hierarchical Regression Predicting Anxiety

Table 8 displays the hierarchical regression analysis for the prediction of anxiety. The bivariate association between spirituality and anxiety was negative and significant ($r = -.22$, $p < .05$), however, when predicting anxiety alongside moratorium, spirituality was no longer significant in the model. The introduction of IPPA in the second step reduced the variance explained by moratorium, but both variables were significant in the model. Participants who reported higher moratorium faith identity and lower quality relationships with parents and peers were more likely to experience greater anxiety.

In terms of effect size, the first model had a small but significant effect ($R^2 = .14$) and the second model, with moratorium and IPPA as significant predictors had an increased effect size of $R^2 = .20$. A Sobel Test of mediation was performed in order to determine whether moratorium mediated the association between spirituality and anxiety. The test yielded a significant result (Sobel Test = -2.67 (S.E. = .07) $p = .008$), which suggested that the effect of lower spirituality on increased anxiety was through increased moratorium. In other words,

participants who were lower in spirituality may have been more anxious because they were more likely to be experiencing higher moratorium, which directly predicted higher anxiety.

Table 8. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Anxiety

Anxiety (N = 86)				
Predictors	B	S.E.	β	p
<i>Step 1</i>				
Moratorium	.335	.112	.354	.004
Spirituality	-.037	.118	-.037	.756
R² = .14				
<i>Step 2</i>				
Moratorium	.281	.111	.297	.013
Spirituality	.012	.116	.012	.918
IPPA	-.314	.127	-.260	.015
R² = .20, F Change = 6.11 (1, 83), p = .015				
Test of Mediation:				
Moratorium, Spirituality, & Anxiety, Sobel Test = - 2.67 (S.E. = .07), p = .008				

8.3.5. Linear Regression Model Predicting Depression

Table 9 displays the final regression analysis for the prediction of depression. The bivariate correlations suggested that depression was only associated with two variables: IPPA and community. Thus, both of these were entered into a single model. Table 9 shows that both variables predicted depression, however community was a stronger predictor. The effect size for this model was small, yet significant, and explained 17% of the variance in depression. Thus, participants who scored highly in connection with their community and had closer relationships with their parents and peers, were significantly more likely to experience lower depressive symptoms.

Table 9. Summary of Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Depression

Depression (N = 74)				
Predictors	B	S.E.	β	p
IPPA	-.111	.059	-.213	.063
Community	-.181	.071	-.287	.013
R² = .17				

Taken together, these results suggest that the variables which most influenced participants' levels of spirituality and religious commitment were intrinsic reasons for church, diffused faith identity, and, in the case of spirituality, moratorium faith identity. Variables which most strongly predicted psychological well-being and anxiety were moratorium faith identity, IPPA, and to a slightly lesser extent, spirituality. Depression was only predicted by social variables - community and IPPA. The presentation of the results will now turn to addressing the fourth and fifth research questions via qualitative description and thematic analysis. The first section primarily addresses the fourth question, "do young people distinguish between spirituality and religion, and if so, in what ways?" The results for this question came from the first two questions of the questionnaire (answered by the 87 participants): "What is spirituality?" and, "What is religion/religiosity?".

Chapter 9: METHODOLOGY II
QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

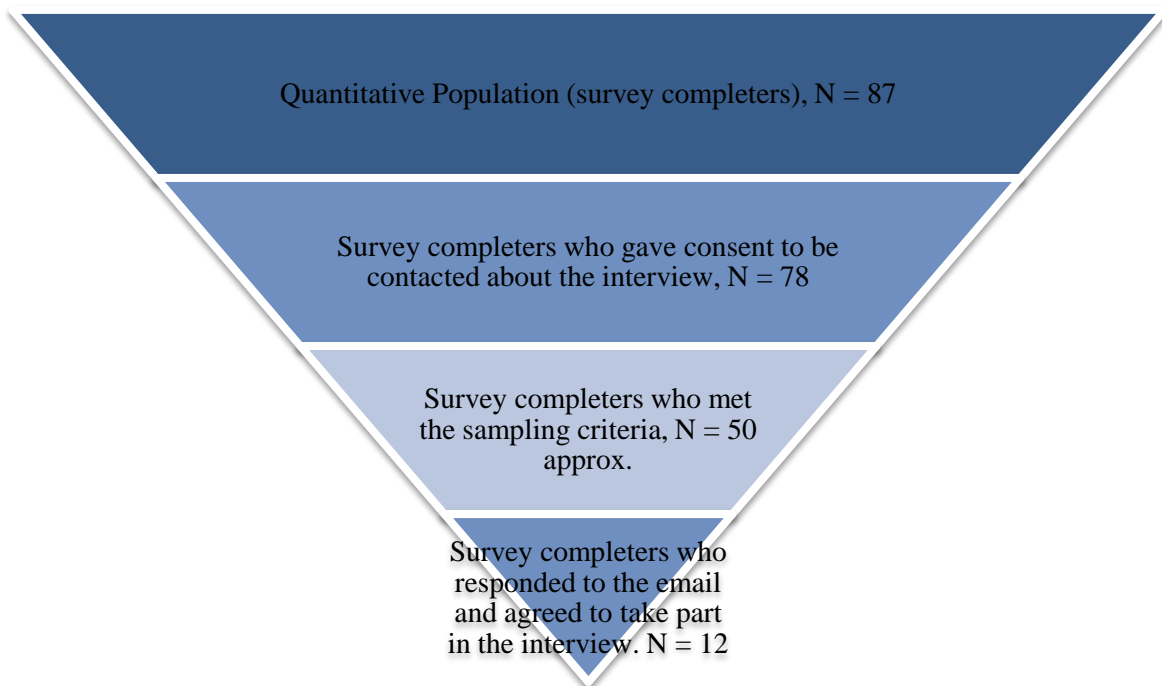
9.1. Sample

An embedded sample was recruited from the participants who completed the survey and gave their consent to be contacted about a telephone interview. It was a purposeful sample based on their responses to certain items on the questionnaire, and in addition, similarities in their religious orientations. I was also aware that the majority would be Christian, because those who rate themselves as religious on the national census are most often associated with a Christian denomination (Griffiths, 2011; Hoverd, 2008).

Sandelowski (2000) refers to “maximum variation sampling” in which the aim is to acquire as diverse a sample as possible in order to increase theoretical saturation. In contrast, the aim of purposeful sampling is to reach greater depth and understanding about a smaller, specific population. With a small sample size, diversity is counterproductive. However, I considered denominational diversity to be helpful. This meant that I could gain insight into a broad Christian perspective without it being exclusive to any one church group. Purposeful sampling was used by Layton, Dollahite and Harvy (2011) to examine which factors encourage religious commitment in adolescents. Because they intended to study religious commitment, they chose a sample of young people who were involved in religious contexts (Layton, Dollahite, & Hardy, 2011).

My sampling criteria were based on measures of spirituality, religious commitment and identity from my questionnaire. Participants were contacted about the interview if they scored higher than average on religiosity and spirituality measures, and if their score on the identity measure suggested higher levels of achievement over the other identity statuses. Figure 1 demonstrates how the interview sample was chosen out of the group of participants who completed the survey.

Figure 1. Interview Sample Selection Process



Characteristics of Interviewees

Twelve interviews were conducted in total, and out of the twelve, eleven were Christians. The twelfth participant had been raised in the Rātana Church, had deviated from it, and searched out his own perspective and experience of spirituality. With regard to the other participants, 4 were Catholic, 2 were Anglican, 3 were Pentecostal, and 2 considered themselves to be non-denominational Christians. See Table 10 below for a display of the interviewee demographics. I have used the participants' words when describing their ethnicity, religious affiliation, and affiliation of their parents.

Table 10. Demographics of Interview Participants

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Denomination/Religious Orientation</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Parental/Caregiver Religiosity</i>
<i>Simon</i>	17	Euro/ Māori	Personal Spirituality	Upper North Island	Grandmother affiliated with Rātana Church
<i>Viola</i>	18	NZ/Euro	Anglican	Upper South Island	Not religious
<i>Max</i>	18	South African	Catholic	Central South Island	Catholic
<i>Jade</i>	18	NZ/Euro	Catholic (Attended Anglican Church)	Upper South Island	Catholic
<i>Frieda</i>	19	NZ/Euro	Pentecostal	Central South Island	Pentecostal
<i>Harry</i>	19	NZ/Euro	Anglican	Central South Island	Mother is Anglican, Father not religious
<i>Keziah</i>	20	NZ/Euro	Non-Denominational Christian (Attends an Evangelical Anglican church)	Central South Island	Pentecostal
<i>Rupert</i>	20	NZ/Euro	Catholic	Central South Island	Mother is Catholic, Father is Anglican
<i>Angeline</i>	21	NZ/Euro	Pentecostal	Central South Island	Pentecostal
<i>Sharlise</i>	21	NZ/Euro	Pentecostal	Lower North Island	Not religious
<i>Esther</i>	21	NZ/Euro	Non-Denominational Christian	Central South Island	Baptist
<i>Lois</i>	21	NZ/Euro	Catholic	Central South Island	Catholic

9.2. Data Collection

Development and Framework of the Interview

The purpose of the interviews was to address the research questions regarding how and whether young people differentiate between spirituality and religion, and also what factors they perceived to have a significant impact on their faith development. A set of topics was devised with questions that related to each topic (see Appendix G for the full interview schedule). For example, personal definitions for key concepts was a topic under which the interviewees were asked what spirituality and religion meant to them. The other topics were devised to find out what might have influenced faith development. An example of this is the topics of family and church. They were included in the interview schedule because of

overseas research that suggests that religious socialisation from one's family and other immediate contexts are significant predictors of developing a personal faith (Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith et al., 2002; Smith & Snell, 2009).

My decision to generate specific questions was based on the following: firstly, I was concerned with reliability, or in the qualitative sense, consistency and "dependability" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I reasoned that if each participant was being asked the same questions, there would be less chance of the findings reflecting my biases or personal agenda. Furthermore, I reasoned that the variation in answers would be related to individual differences rather than other factors such as how talkative they were, or how easily I formed a rapport with the participant. Secondly, Smith and Denton (2005) and Smith and Snell (2009) discuss that in the interviews they conducted, when they asked participants about subjects related to faith and religion, the majority of adolescents, and even young adults, became fairly inarticulate and generic in their answers. It was as if they had not developed a language to talk about their beliefs. However, this was usually not the case for the minority of teens who were exceedingly devoted in their religiosity. These young people were able to give an account of their beliefs, and for some, their reasons for holding those beliefs. The authors admitted that this was rare. Hence, for my research, whilst my interviewees were potentially some of the more devoted young adults who completed the survey, I had reason to suspect that some of them would struggle to articulate their beliefs.

9.3. Interview Methodology

Participants who were chosen for an interview were sent an email in which they were thanked for their contribution to the quantitative part of the study and invited to participate in the phone interview. They were reminded that it was their choice, and told how long they could expect the interview to take. If the participant replied to the email with a positive response, a second email was sent suggesting some days and times that I was available. At the agreed upon time, I used a private office at the university and called the participant using an office telephone. In order to record each interview, I switched the participants to speakerphone and placed a handheld recorder in proximity to the speaker. The participants were informed of this, and at this point I asked permission to continue with the interview. All the participants consented to this. In addition to being informed of the recording, and as part of the ethical considerations, I also discussed confidentiality, freedom of speech, gratuity, permission to skip questions or terminate the interview early, and invited them to ask any questions they may have before commencing (See Appendix F).

I went through each question systematically, taking an active listening style through the use of verbal encouragement, paraphrasing, and checking with participants that I had understood what they were saying. On occasion, I would ask for more specific details, or prompt them by asking, “Could you tell me more about that?”, “Can I ask why that is?”, or “Can you think of a specific example for that?” Often I would clarify the question if the participant asked me to, or adjust my wording if I felt that certain questions would not sound relevant to the participant. For example, Frieda, an 18 year old from the central South Island disliked talking about both religion and spirituality, so after asking how she might define those terms, I asked if there was a word or phrase that she might use to describe her faith if someone asked. She replied,

“I guess I’m just totally in love with Jesus, and in awe of the fact that he loves me. And just trying to live a life that, um, glorifies him. As much as I can.”

I asked the rest of the participants whether they considered themselves to be spiritual, and whether they regarded themselves to be religious. No one else minded discussing the terms, and were able to explain to me if they disliked the words or disliked applying those terms to themselves.

The youngest participant, Simon, a 17 year old from the upper North Island region, was the only interviewee who did not identify himself as a Christian. Rather, he had developed his own form of spirituality from a variety of religions and philosophies. Therefore, there were certain questions I adapted, for example, instead of, “What helps you to feel close to God?” I asked him (with words he’d used previously in the interview), “Is there anything that helps you to feel connected and grounded?” Another similar question that I’d asked other participants was, “How close do you feel to God, and does this feeling change much?” I simply did not ask Simon, because I wanted to respect the fact that he had already explained his perspective on what kind of entity he understood God to be. I felt that such a question could have undermined and devalued his point of view.

I did my utmost to ensure that each participant felt affirmed for their views, and the extent to which they chose to communicate with me. I concluded each interview by expressing my gratitude for all that they had shared with me, and their contribution to the project.

9.3.1. Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985), propose that trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry refers the extent to which qualitative findings can be trusted – the extent to which they are a truthful

representation of the participants' data. Trustworthiness is achieved when the data can be applied to our understanding of the world, and we can trust that the findings would be the same if the same interviews were conducted in the same context. Finally, qualitative results are considered to be trustworthy when they are free from the biases, or ulterior motives of the researcher. What follows is my argument for the trustworthiness of my research, and I will expound on the practices that I put in place to increase the chances of producing truthful and accurate findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that trustworthiness can only be advocated for, it cannot compel the reader in the same way that randomisation and experimentation can.

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olsen and Spiers (2002) critique the practice of justifying trustworthiness after the research has taken place. Instead they favour an active engagement in practices that improve accuracy throughout the research process. They insist that a researcher must be sensitive to their data, and be willing to make adjustments as necessary. This account of my research practice, includes the justification of my actions throughout the process, with the intention that it will demonstrate that a great deal of care was taken to ensure the trustworthiness of these findings. Whilst I have kept the critique of Morse et al (2002) in mind, I will discuss my practices to ensure trustworthiness using the format of Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a guide. I will also often refer to Curtin and Fossey (2007) who provide an account of how they interpreted and put into practice Lincoln and Guba's recommendations.

1. Credibility

Credibility is the qualitative equivalent to internal validity: whether the findings are an accurate portrayal of what is being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is about whether my findings actually answer my research questions, and are a true representation of what my participants said. What follows are some practices recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for increasing credibility, and how these were incorporated into my research approach.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement occurs when a researcher immerses herself in the culture that is under study, before carrying out research on the population. The purpose is to understand the unique practices and characteristics of that culture. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) this increases credibility because it reduces the chance that the researcher will interpret her findings based on the assumptions of her native worldview. Lincoln and Guba (1985) caution researchers from approaching their study as if they are a "stranger in a strange land" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p302). A researcher is naturally an outsider to the

phenomenon under study. This has the benefit of maintaining a degree of objectivity and the distance that is sometimes needed to see clearly. However, this sense of being a stranger can occur when the researcher remains ignorant and makes incorrect inferences about the phenomenon that they would not make if they had taken the time to understand the context. My considerable history of experiences with the landscape of religion and faith may have given me more understanding of the contexts of my participants, than if I held a more secular worldview. Whilst my experiences may have given me some understanding of Christian culture, I cannot assume that I have wholly understood the individual characteristics of my participants' worldviews, or the values and beliefs that they deem most central to their faith. During the interview process I was aware of the need to be open, sensitive to any differences, and verbally affirming. Hence, in terms of credibility, this has been a tension that I have had to hold in balance: my knowledge as providing a helpful backdrop and understanding of a diverse culture, versus, this knowledge becoming a source of bias and a conflict of interest.

Researcher Triangulation/collaboration with supervisors

Curtin and Fossey (2007) discuss the benefits of researcher triangulation in which more than one researcher takes part in the data analysis process. This has not been possible for this project; however, this type of triangulation was substituted with close collaboration with my supervisors. My analysis has been subject to critique and correction by those who have a greater depth of knowledge and experience. As those who are outside of the data, they were able to apply a more objective perspective. It is to these individuals that my biases have been held accountable.

Sensitive Interviewing

Although the interview schedule was structured around a set of questions, it was important to have a sensitive and flexible style of asking the questions and listening. I often empathised with my participants that speaking to a stranger about such personal and abstract topics may be a challenge. Whenever I felt it to be appropriate, I communicated my own difficulties with answering questions, or attempted to convey that I could relate to some of their answers. This is where being an 'insider' to a Christian worldview was helpful. The interviewees may have felt more at ease sharing their thoughts with someone who genuinely understood (Johnstone, 2013).

As I have already discussed, I was intentional about communicating my desire to hear about their individual experiences and perspectives, rather than what they thought might be the right answer. An example of my practice of sensitivity occurred during my interview with Frieda. I was aware of some tension in her voice at the beginning of the interview. She

communicated some anxiety about being able to answer the questions correctly. I reminded her that there were no correct or incorrect answers. What was important was hearing about her perspectives, rather than a defence of her beliefs, or what she thought I might want to hear. I further expressed to her my own insecurities with regard to answering difficult questions, and assured her that I would have even less to say if I was on her end of the phone. We laughed about this together, and she was markedly more relaxed from then on.

I also took a very non-directive approach whenever an interviewee would ask me how to interpret one of the interview questions. Wherever possible, I suggested that they could answer according to what they thought would be the way to interpret the question. Using this style made it feel as if we were working together to create the data.

2. Transferability

Transferability is the qualitative equivalent to external validity, in which the researcher seeks to make their findings generalizable to the wider population. Qualitative researchers must acknowledge that generalisability is not feasible when such small samples of participants are being studied. Therefore, transferability relies on the descriptions that the researcher provides about the participants, and the procedure, and the context of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Thick Description

I have aimed for a degree of transferability in terms of providing adequate “thick descriptions” of my procedures and participants (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Thick description refers to the explanation that a researcher gives for how they undertook the study, methodological framework, instrument development, and the context and characteristics of their participants. A thick description should provide enough information so the study can be thoroughly understood and replicated by a different researcher. It should also argue the case that adequate data saturation has been reached so that the findings are accurate of the participants under study. In the case of my study, I have outlined in detail how it was carried out. I further argue here that the sample size was adequate to achieve data saturation. Across the twelve interviews that were conducted there was plenty of consistency between answers and the emergence of patterns. These will be expounded below in the Data Analysis section.

Another aspect of transferability is being transparent about who the data applies to and in which context. My participants were a sample of New Zealand young adults between the ages of 17 and 21. They self-rated on my quantitative measure as having a high degree of religious and/or spiritual commitment, with at least some integration of this into their

personal identities. Their answers cannot be generalised to the mainstream population of New Zealand young adults, because their commitment and participation in their religion and spirituality (usually Christianity) is higher than average.

1. Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability can be understood as the qualitative version of reliability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to make the findings dependable, one must attempt to create stability throughout the research process so that the findings could theoretically be replicated if the same questions were administered to the participants in the same setting. Confirmability is not so much about the findings as it is about the stance of the researcher. Have I been attentive enough to my biases so as to reduce their influence on the findings? Research has confirmability when the findings are an accurate reflection of the views of the participants, rather than the perspectives of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Asking Open-Ended Questions

As described above, the interview was conducted under six main topics with open ended questions. Although the clearly defined structure had the potential to limit where the interview could go, it had the benefit of increasing the consistency of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). More importantly, asking open-ended questions provided space for the participants to share their own thoughts and experiences. Often their answers were very extensive.

Process of transcription

During verbatim transcription I chose to capture most sentence fillers. For example, many of the participants used phrases such as, “you know”, and “I don’t know”, and words such as, “Like”. Other common fillers were “um” and “ah”. Capturing copious amounts of these fillers was not an advantage in itself, however it helped me to focus on being attentive and accurate. When creating transcripts I felt that capturing the actual words would increase the quality of the coding during the analysis process. After each interview was transcribed, I listened to them a second time, correcting errors and ensuring that they were typed out word for word. Copies of each completed transcript were saved twice, so that I had one completed copy for my records and one copy to work with for the analysis phase. I highlighted and coded the copies, and also changed the order of small sections in a number of them when I found that they answered previous questions.

Having transcribed my own interviews, as opposed to hiring someone to do it for me means that I have been able to retain a high degree of familiarity with the interview content. This also increases accuracy because I have the memories of the interview. For example, if a word was difficult to make out as I transcribed, I could still remember the context.

Maintaining Reflexivity

I entered the research process with my own views about religion and spirituality, and with my own history and experiences with Christianity. As I discussed above, this has been a strength to the credibility of this study in that to some degree I understand the spiritual culture and world view of my participants. The possibility of bias or personal interest have been minimised through treating this as an exploratory project, and asking questions rather than making hypotheses. Secondly, by using qualitative description as my main form of analysis, I have been able to remain “close to my data”. Remaining close to the data means that the researcher does not add extra layers of interpretation. Rather, they stay at the “surface” in order to get the facts (Sandelowski, 2000). Part of this process also means that the researcher expresses the findings in the language of their participants, as Sandelowski (2000) recommends for qualitative descriptive studies. This gave my participants more power over the analysis process, and it means that the analysis is more driven by their answers and explanations of their experiences, rather than my interpretations of what they said.

In addition, I kept a journal during the period of conducting the interviews. Immediately after each interview I wrote about everything that stood out to me, which included details about the participant, such as their way of speaking, any obvious personality traits, level of enthusiasm, and background information. I also wrote any impressions or thoughts that I had about either the interview as a whole, anything the participant said, any issues or questions that arose for me, and any improvements that I needed to make on my interview technique. In addition, I recorded similarities between participants that stood out to me, common ideas and possible themes. For example, in my interview with Lois I recorded feeling a sense of awe in the way that she was able to articulate her thoughts about faith in a Catholic context. This reminded me of having grown up and being influenced by church leaders and adults who considered Catholicism to be a dubious form of Christianity. Over the years I have since re-formulated my own perspectives about issues of exclusion and inclusion.

Morse et al. (2002) recommend that good investigators are those who are able to be responsive and sensitive during the data collection process. They propose that a strict adherence to instruction or protocol can hinder the trustworthiness of a study (Morse, Barrett,

Mayan, Olsen, & Spiers, 2002). As mentioned above, my own religious experience and understanding of certain Christian frames of thinking enabled me to be sensitive to how some of my participants might be feeling about the questions, and what kind of response or reassurance I needed to give. Thus, throughout the data collection phase I attempted to be honest with myself, and follow this through by recording my thoughts. I have attempted to remain aware of this tension between knowing about the culture and contexts of my participants, with the avoidance of this knowledge becoming a source of bias. Finally, the benefit of a phone interview is that there is a certain anonymity to it, which may have helped my participants to feel more comfortable in sharing their experiences, than if they had been face to face with a stranger or in a group.

9.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was the main framework for analysing the data (Sandelowski, 2000), with the specific use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Sandelowski (2000), qualitative content analysis is a way of condensing the data and providing a summary of the informational components. It requires that the data collection and analysis processes mutually inform each other (Sandelowski, 2000). As discussed above, my way of achieving this was to write my immediate impressions after each interview, including key ideas and patterns. Recording and noting repetitions of these ideas and patterns also occurred during the transcription phase. In the next phase of content analysis, the researcher condenses and summarises the data by creating a set of codes that are based on the data itself. Therefore, it is a flexible process in which the researcher fully engages with the contents of the data. This is the beginning stages of creating themes. Braun and Clark (2006) define thematic analysis as analysing and presenting the data set in detail by reporting patterns in the form of key ideas, or themes. In most circumstances, a thematic analysis arises out of a content analysis, where themes are extracted by discerning patterns within the codes.

Braun and Clark (2006) outline six phases of a thematic analysis. I used this as a guide for analysing the data.

Phase 1: becoming familiar with the data. Transcribing my own interviews enabled me to become familiar with my data. The process of transcription entailed that I listen through each interview twice: the first time, to write out the entire recording, and the second time to make corrections and ensure accuracy. I then took note of any repeated words, or ideas that stood out to me. After I was satisfied that the transcriptions were accurate, I read

them through again and deleted any distracting features, such as prolonged use of sentence fillers that prevented me from easily reading the participant's answer. To make reading easier, I also removed my own intonations and comments that I had made during the interview. I ensured that each answer was categorised according to the questions. Sometimes this required that small changes be made to the original order of the interview, since some participants gave more in depth information about a previous topic while they were answering a different question. When I made these alterations, it didn't significantly change the format, but did improve the structure of the data.

Phase 2: generation of codes. The process of generating codes began with highlighting the main ideas for each question I asked in the interviews. As I re-read each interview I highlighted key phrases and sentences that directly answered the questions. I created a comments margin in each transcript where I could summarise the answer to each question. This resulted in each transcript having its own set of codes. Having coded each transcript, I used a separate document and created lists of common codes and phrases across all the transcripts, using my main topics as headings.

Phase 3: the researcher begins to draw out the main themes. In order to generate main themes, I summarised my list of codes into several essential phrases that described the thoughts and perspectives of my participants with regard to each topic. Condensing my codes in this way was helpful for grasping the main ideas in the interviews. These were not yet at the level of themes.

Braun and Clark (2006) warn against researchers using their own headings as the themes of their analysis. There was a danger of being distracted by the structure of my interviews, and only seeing the data in terms of the main topics with which I had used to format the interview schedule. To overcome this, I had to adjust my way of thinking about the data. This may have also reflected a shift from thinking in terms of quantitative analysis to qualitative. I discovered that although I was aiming to describe my data with as little inferred interpretation as possible (in keeping with qualitative description), some abstraction was required in order to get past the structure. I started to find overarching ideas that often occurred in more than one topic, such as the idea of internalising faith. In answer to many of the questions I asked, it was apparent that the participants were describing their faith as something that they had internalised for themselves, and was a priority in their daily lives.

Phase 4 & 5: reviewing and refining the themes: Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend using mind maps as a means for defining and understanding what each theme is about (see Appendix H). The use of a mind map gave me a visual aid for naming the themes,

and determining the key points under each theme. It was also useful for determining which main ideas were sub-themes, rather than main themes. I reviewed each theme in light of my main research questions, considering how these ideas addressed and answered the questions. I returned to the transcripts in order to establish that there was enough evidence to support each theme, and obtained quotes that portrayed this evidence.

Phase 6: the production of the report: In addition to using the mind map, re-reading transcripts, and producing quotes, I discovered that the write-up was a process of refining the themes and constructing the story of the data. During the writing phase I understood my themes to be more meaningful to my research questions, than when I was merely using visual aids. Sandelowski (1998) discusses the importance of choosing which story to tell. This was necessary for presenting such an extensive data set. It was important to choose themes that addressed the research questions, and hence, complemented the quantitative part of the study.

9.5. Qualitative Questions from the Questionnaire

The first two questions from the questionnaire were open questions which asked participants to write what they understood “religion/religiosity” and “spirituality” to mean. This contributed to addressing the first research question: Do young people distinguish between “religiosity” and “spirituality”? If so, in what ways? The themes from the descriptions that the participants ($n=87$) gave were derived from coding answers and grouping them together under headings. Definitions were usually one sentence, with only a few being over two sentences. Most were between ten and fifteen words, with the few longer definitions being over twenty words. Key words or common clauses were those that commonly appeared as the subject of a definition, and themes were derived by compiling key words that were synonymous with each other. For example, a participant gave this definition for spirituality, which was typical in length:

“Belief/understanding of something more than the physical world, not necessarily related to religion.”

Belief or understanding are the subject of the sentence. Words such as understanding, awareness, or perception were placed in a similar category. “Belief” was a word that was most commonly used, hence it became a main theme, whilst other cognitive words were considered to be a minor subtheme. The clause, “more than the physical world” was also a common idea that was often attached to the subject of their definitions, or was itself the subject. This was linked with similar ideas such as “another realm”, “transcendent dimension”, hence this was also a main theme. Once I had read through all of the

descriptions, I began to create a list of codes. I read through the lists several more times and created a tally of the number of times a code was referred to. Often, the participants' descriptions referred to more than one code. It was common for an answer to have two main ideas. The tallies on each code were added separately for spirituality and religion. Codes that were mentioned by 20% (roughly 18-19 times out of 87) or more of the participants were classed as main themes, while minor themes were chosen as codes that were mentioned by 10% of the participants (12-13 times out of 87). This was my criteria because other codes occurred very few times in the sample. The main themes quite clearly contained the majority of responses. In order to standardise my judgement of whether an idea was a minor theme, or idiosyncratic, I employed the quantitative concept of the 95% confidence interval (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Ideas that occurred less than 5% of the time were counted as idiosyncratic, whilst those that occurred under 20% of the time were considered to be minor themes. Ideas that occurred less than 10% of the time were considered to be 'common ideas', but will not be discussed as part of the analysis.

Table 11: Frequencies of Themes for Spirituality and Religion

	<i>Spirituality</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Religion/Religiosity</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Main Themes	Connectedness/relationship (with God/Higher being)	28	32.2	Belief (System/set of beliefs, stand-alone belief, or belief in God/Higher being)	44	50.6
	Belief (Stand-alone, or belief in God/Higher being)	24	27.6	Ways of living/ritual/practices	22	25.3
				Community/group affiliation/specific religion	17	19.5
Minor Themes	Non-material dimension/other realm	15	17.2	Rules/Morals	13	14.9
	Part of the self	12	13.8			
Common Ideas < 10%	Ways of living/ritual/practices	7	8.0	Spirituality	6	6.9
	Purpose/Meaning	6	6.9	Negative view	5	5.7
	Religion	5	5.7			
	Holy Spirit	5	5.7			
Idiosyncratic Ideas < 5%	Growth/transformation	4	4.6	Purpose/Meaning	1	1.1
	Relation to others	3	3.4			
	Relation to the natural world	3	3.4			

Chapter 10: RESULTS II

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

10.1. Participant Definitions for Spirituality and Religion: A Thematic Analysis

Table 11 above displays the frequencies of major themes, minor themes, common and idiosyncratic ideas from participants' definitions of spirituality and religion in the questionnaire. The percentages do not accumulate to 100% because the participants' descriptions often covered more than one theme or idea, two main themes, and two minor themes were identified for spirituality. The overarching themes were (a) connectedness or relationship to God or a Higher being, (b) 'belief' as a stand-alone word or regarding God or Higher being. The minor themes were (a) connection with or belief in a 'spiritual' or non-material dimension (transcendence), and (b) that spirituality incorporated part of the self – one's spirit, soul, or deeper feelings. Three common ideas were that spirituality provided a sense of meaning and purpose, that it was related to religion, and that the Holy Spirit was an important element. Idiosyncratic ideas were that spirituality involves a process of growth or transformation, a way of living, rituals (less this aspect for spirituality), and practices such as prayer, and finally, that it involves one's relationship to others and to the natural world.

There were three main themes and one minor theme for the term "religion". Most of the participants' answers fit into one or more of these. The main themes were (a) 'belief' was a particularly prominent theme, and this was used as either a stand-alone word, with regard to God, or in an organisational sense: a "set of beliefs" or "system of beliefs", (b) a community affiliation, group who share similar beliefs, or belonging to a group, including the mention of specific religions, and (c) ways of living, practices, rituals or traditions related to one's beliefs. The minor theme was similar to the previous theme, and that was the mention of rules, morals, adhering to rules, or religion as a set of rules that are to be followed. Two common ideas were that religion relates to one's spirituality, and some had a negative view of religiosity, for example, two participants referred to the idea that it is a 'manmade attempt' to reach God. An idiosyncratic idea was that it provides a sense of meaning and purpose.

For the following analysis, I will first present the themes for spirituality, followed by religion, and then the ways in which themes overlapped and contrasted across both terms.

Spirituality

Main Theme: Connection or Relationship with God/Higher Being or Power

Over 30% of participants wrote that spirituality is about a sense of connection, relationship or bond. The object of this connection was usually God, a Higher being, or supernatural force.

“Being connected to God”

“Your bond with God, or a higher power”

Subtheme: Connecting with or belief in another realm or non-material dimension

Others included the idea of connection with having an awareness of a realm that is beyond the physical or tangible world. This often implied the idea of transcendence. For example,

“An understanding/feeling that there is something more than the physical presence in life.”

“Understanding that there is a realm outside of the physical and connecting with it.”

Subtheme: Spirituality incorporates a deep part of the self

As well as describing a non-material realm, several participants described spirituality as involving a deep or immaterial part of the self – the soul or spirit. They also described this part of the self as something that is to be discovered, and understood, and is the part of us that is involved in the connection to this realm, or to God.

“Things regarding one’s spirit, more metaphysical experiences, belief/participation in a greater realm.”

“Being aware of God, who is supernatural and above everything physical, as well as our own non-physical entity – soul and spirit.”

The above quote suggests that it is this awareness of God that contributes to being aware of one’s own soul or spirit.

Main Theme: Belief

Belief was a common word choice, with its object being God, a higher power, or something “beyond the physical”. It was often mentioned as a single concept, or in conjunction with other cognitive experiences such as values, awareness, understanding, and also feeling.

“Believing in God.”

“Believing in something deeper, and connecting with a higher being.”

“A person’s views, understandings and beliefs of the spiritual realm”

This context given to beliefs suggests that spirituality is not only understood as a cognitive concept, but is something that is experienced and lived. The ways that “belief” was referred to suggest an engagement with the object of those beliefs, and also impacting the way that a person lives.

“Believing in God and the bible, and behaving accordingly. Having faith.”

“Spirituality is a personal belief in “otherworldly” things that tend to shape how a person lives their life and their morals and beliefs.”

This awareness and belief in a higher being or “otherworldly things” is something that makes a difference to the way that one lives.

Religion/Religiosity

Main Theme: Belief

The word “belief” was the most common in the definitions of religion. Belief was mentioned in a variety of ways by up to half of the participants. It was often mentioned as a stand-alone word in conjunction with words such as ‘morals’ and ‘values’, but just as often it was used with reference to God or a Higher Power.

“Something that you have faith and believe in, having strong values towards.”

“A certain belief in a Higher power.”

“Peoples’ beliefs and what they perceive a ‘God’ to be.”

The descriptions often included the words “set of” or “system”, pertaining to the organisational aspect of religious belief. The descriptions suggest that religion is not just miscellaneous beliefs about anything of a sacred nature, but rather a network of beliefs that are held and adhered to. It also suggests that religion is considered to be more of an organised system of beliefs than is spirituality.

“Customs and traditions based on a belief system.”

“A specific set of beliefs, rituals or rules regarding spirituality.”

“Category of beliefs you fit into.”

Main Theme: Community

Religion was often defined as involving a group, institution or community. Sometimes they also mentioned particular religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. Where belief and or practice were described, it was often with reference to unity with others who follow the same religion.

“Being part of a community with the same morals and goals of life as oneself, in order to progress on a healthy manner along that path.”

“Religion is a community of people who share a common belief.”

Main Theme: Practice and Tradition

Many of the participants defined religion in terms of practice and living one's life according to one's beliefs. Ideas that were associated with this theme were rituals, traditions, worship, and religion as a way of living.

“Religion is what we believe in. It's our faith that we live by and it gives us guidelines to help us live each day.”

“Adherence [sic] to common practices/regimes/routines/regulations to achieve strong unity of belief.”

“The practice around my beliefs.”

For these respondents, religion is inseparable from practice. Practice defines religion more so than only belief.

Sub-Theme: Rules and Morals

Rules and morals relate closely to the theme of practice and tradition. The common idea is that religion influences the way you live and the decisions you make. However, rules and morals were described enough times in order to warrant separate mention. When participants described religion they did not only describe prescribed belief (“system” or “set” of beliefs), but also prescribed behaviour.

“Following the rules set by the religion you follow.”

“Something that you follow, different religions have different morals provided, and different traditions and rules.”

Sub-Theme: They are Related Concepts

Considering how religion and spirituality relate to each other as Pargament (1999) and others have done can be helpful for understanding how people conceptualise the terms and whether they perceive them to be similar or different concepts (Selvam, 2013; Stifoss-Hanssen, 1999). Some answers incorporated both religion and spirituality, and this gave an indication as to how the participants perceived the two to relate to each other. Where the respondents were defining spirituality, religious practices were sometimes mentioned as facilitating one's spirituality, or one's connection to God/Higher Being, as the following statements about spirituality allude to:

"Going to church and other religious activities therefore being connected to God."

"What I think is that spirituality can be considered someone's consciousness, but through Christianity and building a relationship with God is it opened up fully and we begin to understand and know what it means to be spiritual."

These statements and others suggested that for these religiously affiliated young adults, their religious worldview provided a context through which they expressed, understood, and defined their spirituality.

When the respondents were using spirituality in their definitions for religion, spirituality appeared to be something that could exist apart from religion; something that could be broader than religion. The following statements suggest that whilst this may be the case, religion gave appropriate boundaries through which their spirituality could be expressed. Within a religious framework they experienced connection to God or another realm – which was a common definition of spirituality. In the following statements the respondents used spirituality in their explanations of religion.

"An avenue through which to explore your spirituality."

"A specific set of beliefs, rituals or practices regarding your spirituality."

"Religion is faith lived out, an extension of spirituality that marks every facet of one's personhood."

A Comparison of the Two Terms (a Summary)

Participants appeared to perceive considerable similarity between religion and spirituality. Belief was a term that was common to both concepts, and half of participants made mention of it for religion, whilst just over one quarter mentioned it in their descriptions

of spirituality. The object of belief was also the same: God, a Higher Being, or another realm.

There were also some marked differences in the ways that spirituality and religion were described. Spirituality was perceived to be much more relational, and this was evidenced by connection and relationship being a main theme. For religion, participants talked about God as a giver of rules, or a Being that was believed in within the parameters of one's religion.

Belief as applied to religion, was often understood to be part of a set or a system. The descriptions suggested that religion was perceived as more organised and communal, whilst spirituality was often described as involving a non-material realm, or part of the self, such as the soul. Spirituality appears to be considered as more of an individual undertaking, since community, or others were barely mentioned.

Finally, in the instances that either term was used in the definition of the other, spirituality was described as the broader concept, but one that most respondents saw as being expressed within their religious worldview and practices. Religion was the framework through which spirituality coloured its expression.

10.2. Thematic Analysis of the Interviews

10.2.1. Introduction

The interviews were another avenue for exploring the research question: Do young people distinguish between 'religion' and 'spirituality'? If so, in what ways? The other research question that the interviews addressed was, what do young adults perceive as influencing the development of their faith and spirituality? 'Spirituality' and 'religion/religiosity' were terms that the interviewees had mixed feelings and opinions about. For some, spirituality was a positive term, whilst they had a negative view of religiosity. For others, it was the other way around. Most of the interviewees were able to give short descriptions of both terms, but often clarified that they couldn't articulate the full meanings of the words. It was apparent that while the interviewees were able to talk about these words and in most cases, explain how they were applicable to them, they did not capture the full experiences of anyone's faith.

One overarching concept seemed to be common to each of the interviewees: each of the participants considered their faith to be their own. It was something that they no longer relied on their parents for, but had made their own decisions and had a unique way of

practicing it. Having internalised their faith, all of the interviewees expressed that their faith was very important in their lives. This meant that they practiced their faith beyond attendance at church on Sundays, and even that church itself had a greater role in their lives than Sunday attendance.

Despite a strong sense of personal faith ownership, the participants understood their faith to be heavily influenced by the people closest to them. The greatest childhood influence was their parents. Parents provided implicit and explicit socialisation for faith. The most common idea for this theme was that their parents had chosen their environments, which in turn, had a direct influence on the faith of the interviewees. These environments were places such as Christian schools, church, and establishing relationships with other Christian families.

Church, and the social networks connected to church also had a significant bearing on the faith development of the participants. Ten of them spent time with church members outside of Sundays, or had other duties during the week such as church band practice and youth group leading. Often the participants had formed meaningful relationships with mentors who were instrumental in shaping and encouraging their faith. In addition, mentors were a powerful form of social and emotional support.

Eight out of the twelve interviewees explained that believing was sometimes difficult, and that faith required the decision to believe during these times. Having questions and doubting their religion was part of most of the participants' experiences. Questions often presented a challenge to their beliefs, and some asked questions that would appear to be fundamental to a Christian worldview. However, asking questions was also often a part of faith development, and for some interviewees, precipitated growth.

The interviewees commonly described moments that had contributed to the development of an active faith, or experiences for which they accepted the term 'spiritual'. These experiences were commonly moments of feeling particularly connected to God. These moments sometimes helped the participants to cope in difficult circumstances. They described finding support and strength in times of prayer, or in experiencing a direct, supernatural connection with God. The interviewees who used their faith and spirituality as a means to cope, often experienced this support as coming from their mentoring relationships and small groups at church. Finally, all of the interviewees appeared to have a very strong faith or spiritual orientation that they considered to be very important, or even the top priority in their lives. The following analysis describes these themes in greater detail, with this concept of internalised faith as a theme which underpins the other themes.

The themes have been arranged according to each research question. There are several themes presented beneath each research question with the purpose of providing an answer with several components. To answer the first question (do young people distinguish between religiosity and spirituality, and if so, in what ways?) the participants' ideas for spirituality and religion are presented separately with sub-themes. The aspects of spirituality that were mentioned by the participants were that it is a style of one's faith expression rather than a separate entity, it is about your relationship with God, it incorporates a part of you that goes beyond the physical, there were some negative or ambiguous opinions about it, and that it can occur outside of a Christian worldview. For religiosity, the themes were church and the church community, and religion as being about rules. A subtheme that is presented along with the descriptions of religiosity and spirituality was that of the differences and similarities that the participants saw between their parents' faith and their own faith. This is presented in answer to the first research question, because, the differences between their own and their parents' faith were similar to some of the ways that they distinguished between spirituality and religion.

The themes presented in answer to the other research question (What factors do young adults perceive as influencing the development of their faith and spirituality?) are factors that influenced the faith of the participants. Internalising and owning one's faith is discussed throughout, as it seemed to be exceedingly relevant to the participants. While there is a section that is exclusively about this theme, it has also supplemented the explanations of some of the other themes, such as the influence of parents and questioning faith. The other main themes are the influence of parents on the participants' faith development, the influence of mentors, the role of church, prioritising faith and a relationship with God, questioning faith, experiences of God or the supernatural, and the contribution of faith to coping and well-being.

10.2.2. Themes in Answer to the First Research Question: Do Young People Distinguish Between "Religiosity" And "Spirituality"? If so, in What Ways?

Spirituality

An approach to faith, not a separate thing

For eleven of the interviewees, both their Christian worldview and denominational affiliation appeared to influence the ways in which they talked about spirituality. Those who identified themselves as being spiritual spoke about it as a style of being Christian, or a way

that one might approach faith. Being spiritual was often contrasted with ritualistic or mechanical behaviour (which was associated with religion for some of these participants). Therefore, a spiritual approach was one that was not formulaic, but rather, more participatory and authentic. Jade described her change from becoming less religious and more spiritual,

“I used to just turn up to church and you know, go to school and things, but now it means a lot more to me. It’s more personal, and more about my life, and doing the right thing. It’s not about following the rules and going to church on Sunday, it’s about doing what’s right for me and my community, so I kind of feel like I’ve become more spiritual.”

A spiritual approach to faith meant that church, prayer and worship were meaningful, and involved emotion. According to Max,

“It means to me more that my faith isn’t just a set of beliefs, or a set of specific practices; it’s largely to do with my involvement – like, how I feel about things.”

Relationship with God

Viola and four of the others described spirituality as being about their relationship with God, and feeling connected to God,

“I think spiritual is sort of about the interaction with God and how you let God into your life. And, definitely there’s the element of the Holy Spirit in there as well. But it’s more than that, it’s just about...following and trusting and being with God.”

It comes from inside

Some described spirituality as something internal, and incorporates non-material parts of a person. Lois explained,

“Being spiritual is kind of....the bit that comes from inside. Your spirituality is...where your soul and your psyche: how they react to what you believe.”

Angeline had a similar way of describing it,

“I would describe myself as spiritual – I think everyone is spiritual. But, I think it’s that...being spiritual is just being aware that you are more than your physical body, that there’s more going on than just what you can see.”

Negative or ambiguous about it

Some of the interviewees described a negative view of spirituality. They described the term as “airy fairy” and not compatible with their personality. Neither Esther nor Keziah described themselves as spiritual, but rather “analytical” and “black and white”. They described spirituality as being outside of a Christian worldview – more related to the New Age movement and secular meditation. Frieda also wasn’t comfortable using the term to describe her faith.

“I mean the Christian life is a pretty spirit-led one, so I guess that would be spiritual...but I don’t know, I don’t really think about, like, labels and things when it comes to my faith, I just kinda do it.”

While she acknowledges that there is a spiritual side to Christianity, she does not understand the word to be an adequate descriptor of her faith. To a slightly lesser extent, this was also true for many of the other interviewees. Those who did apply the word to their own faith, did so because they were asked to as part of the interview. Considering the fact that the majority of participants were very hesitant, and took some time to think about what spirituality meant to them, I got the impression that they would not normally use this term when describing their faith.

Outside of a Christian worldview

All but one of the interviewees were Christian, therefore, engaging with the term ‘spiritual’ meant doing so within a Christian worldview. However, Simon identified himself as having an active spirituality apart from any religious affiliation. He defined his spirituality in loose terms as something that was related to his morals and values, and incorporated an understanding of the “interconnectedness” of life,

“...thinking about how everything is interconnected. Everything sort of, works off the same...energy, I guess.”

Although Simon had many different views to most of the other participants who were interviewed, his interview provided valuable insight. Since his identification with spirituality was of a similar strength of the identities of the others, I have not excluded his interview from the analysis. His interview helps to suggest that whilst the contents of young people’s beliefs may be different, they have some of the same experiences in common. For example, he described what he often felt during times of contemplation,

“...being connected to something not tangible, not physical. Just that feeling that you know something – something is there that you connect with and you feel that

warmth. But, it's not necessarily something that you can describe. Um...just that feeling that you know that you're – you're in the right place."

Rupert and Lois also described such moments, in terms that sounded similar to Simon's experience. Rupert said,

"...every now and then I get, um, a good feeling – you could say. Um, when I'm on the right track, sometimes during prayer I've been pretty down and just asked for help and guidance, and I've always come away strengthened..."

Lois described what she sometimes feels during prayer,

"...little moments where you feel – you just know that God has got his hand on you, or you know that something that's happened has been a blessing."

Simon made mention of his early experiences with the church and being raised by his religiously devoted Grandmother as being significant in the development of his morals and beliefs. However, at this time in his life, social influences were not as important to his faith and spirituality as they were for the other eleven interviewees. However, the other themes such as the priority of faith, and having an internalised faith were just as relevant as they were for the others.

Religion/Religiosity

Positive definitions of this term tended to relate it to church, and a way of living, whilst negative definitions tended to relate the term to rituals and rules. Most of the participants agreed that rituals and rules were negative, and if not entirely a bad thing, shouldn't be the sum total of one's faith experience.

Church and Community (Traditional Denominations)

Descriptions of 'religion' tended to depend on denomination. The Anglican and Catholic interviewees were more comfortable with this term, and didn't mind identifying themselves as religious. For them, it entailed a positive connection to the church and also suggested an historical and sometimes, divine, credibility to their faith. Rupert, who is Catholic, expressed a particularly positive view of religion,

"For us the religion is like, it's what Jesus actually set up as the church. So I mean, the religion in itself was something that was put there to guide us and help us to be as lovingly close with God as possible. So for me, religion's like, heck yeah! That's what I want to be!"

Lois, who is also Catholic, expressed a positive view of religion, and described it as involving community and shared belief,

“Being religious means to me being part of a community, ascribing to a set of beliefs, and being part of people who continually learn more about and test and live amongst those beliefs.”

The ideas of shared belief and being part of a community were common in the interviewees’ descriptions of religion – including Simon, who did not personally identify with a particular religion or religious community, but was brought up as part of the Rātana church.

Rules

Jade, a Catholic, explained how she defines religion,

“I do still follow all the rules and you know, say the right bits the right places, and I think religion is more about how you worship rather than your relationship with God, or...your personal faith. I think it’s about the way you do it.”

Jade and others, such as Lois, Rupert and Max saw following the rules as a good thing, as long as this was balanced by authenticity and having a relationship with God. In other words, a religious approach to one’s faith should be balanced by a spiritual one.

For some of the interviewees, a religious approach that only incorporates ritualised behaviour was perceived to be negative. These participants were usually non-denominational or Pentecostal Christians. Esther explained the relation between religion and rules,

“There’s that, sort of, law abiding, black and white, prescribed religious aspect of Christianity that I don’t fully embrace, but I do recognise the spiritual disciplines of reading the bible and praying, meeting together with other Christians, and all those sorts of things.”

Like Esther, some of the interviewees who were of either a Pentecostal or of a non-denominational leaning tended to clarify which aspects of religion that they perceived to relate to themselves. Sometimes, they clarified that they were religious because they were following a certain way of living. Angeline described it in this way:

“I guess I’m following a certain – a set – like a way of living because of my faith. Yeah, I guess that would make me religious.”

Sharlise identified herself loosely as religious in a similar way:

“I have a religious lifestyle that I commit myself to something on a regular basis.”

However, she also described aspects of religion as negative, “

...works-based, like idolising “I have to do this for God, for me to be right before him”, when actually, Jesus has paid it all.”

Frieda expressed definite distaste for the term ‘religion’. Although heavily involved with her church and Christianity, Frieda explained that her perception of true faith was that it was something that should be freeing. She did not perceive any part of ‘religion’ to encourage this freedom,

“Religion – religion is where you kind of have to...like, you pray this many times a day and in this position, and at this time, and it’s very...strict, I guess? Christianity...true Christianity is more ...it’s so much more free because we believe that God is with us all the time...he’s more of a friend than this big huge God in the sky. It’s very freeing, rather than like, chaining you to, um, time and things.”

Summary

For the Anglican and Catholic participants, there was less of an observable difference between spirituality and religion. Rather, both were considered to be valid internal dispositions towards the Christian faith – the ways that one approaches and practices faith.

The majority of interviewees gave short descriptions of the terms ‘spirituality’ and ‘religion’. They had some ideas as what the terms meant to them and also to others. There was also some awareness of the dialogue that happens about these two terms, such as when people say that they are spiritual but not religious. No one described spirituality and religion as if they were the way that they would usually discuss their faith with another person. Frieda’s dislike of labels regarding her faith was the most definite disengagement from the word ‘religion’. For the others, these terms seemed only partially relevant, and could be used in a conversation for the benefit of those who do not share their Christian affiliation. However, the participants seemed to prefer other terms and discourses for describing their faith.

Overall, it can be said that for this group of mainly Christian interviewees, spirituality may loosely describe an approach to faith and a Christian worldview, but does not accurately capture their experience. Similarly, ‘religion’ was also perceived to be an approach to Christianity, rather than a description for Christianity. It is possible to be a ‘spiritual’ Christian, or a ‘religious’ Christian. Furthermore, in answer to the question of how different these terms are from one another, it may be more accurate to say that for the Christian

interviewees, the question that is better understood might be to ask how either term is similar or different from Christianity.

Subtheme: similarities and differences between parents' faith and interviewees' faith

Out of the twelve interviewees, eight grew up with Christian parents. Of the eight, most felt that their own faith was fundamentally similar to that of their parents. For some, it meant that they were affiliated with the same denomination. It was difficult for most to articulate exactly which ways they were similar to their parents, even though they were quite definite that there was significant similarities. These similarities were explained as the same "values" or "views on things". Max interpreted the similarities with his parents' faith in terms of sharing the same views on scientific issues, such as evolution,

"Well, I'd say similarities would definitely be ways of understanding the world, like evolution and that sort of thing, like agreeing, because...they're both scientists. So I've definitely had the influence to be pro- in that light."

Because Max's parents support the theory of evolution, Max has developed a similar understanding.

Frieda was a little less articulate, but seemed to tap into the idea of similar views. These views are based on having attended the same church as her parents for most of her life.

"I don't know, I guess we just kind of have the same, like, views on things? And, because we both, because we go – they have their beliefs and their church – and we've been to the same church, and so that's kind of...shaped it, and so made it similar...you know?"

Keziah explained that she shared her parents' interpretation of the bible and how she applied these principles to her life.

"We've got very similar fundamental views, in a sense that when it comes down to it, you know, we, both of us are very biblically-minded – all my principles – my fundamental principles are very literally taken from the Bible."

Whilst these young adults were quick to say that their faith was similar to their parents, some had more to say about how they were different. The differences shared a common theme: the interviewees felt that their faith was more expressive than their parents. Some used the term "spiritual" to describe the difference between themselves and their parents. In this instance, the difference between religiosity and spirituality meant that their parents had been committed Christians for a long time, and that their faith appeared to be

stale. This is contrasted to the ways that the interviewees conceptualised their own faith: that they experienced and expressed it with more energy and authenticity. Jade explained,

“My parents are very religious but they’re not spiritual. We’re Catholics...so, they don’t really believe in the whole spiritual side of things, but they go to church every week and they believe in God. And so they follow the rules. Mine’s pretty similar, only, I attended an Anglican high school, so I got more of a spiritual side.”

Max seemed to have a similar view of his parents’ faith,

“Quite formal. Both my parents are Catholic. And their regular practices are traditional – like, regularly attending Mass each week, but that’s about the extent of their religious involvement. And, I wouldn’t really call them particularly spiritual. But I’d say my views are more – slightly more spiritual I guess? Less, um, ritualistic, and more...I don’t know, hard to say...sort of more my choice, really.”

He and several others shared the perspective that their parents’ practice of faith was more conservative, quieter, and more ritualistic. In other words, they saw their parents as more religious than they were (with ‘religion’ referring to adherence to rules and rituals, and involving less authenticity).

Esther and Keziah described the differences between themselves and their parents in slightly different terms. Esther expressed her perspective that while she is growing in her faith, her parents are not,

“When I think about their faith, it seems like – to me that they’ve sort of hit a rut. They’ve sort of plateaued in their life, and, whereas for me, it’s been a period of growth over the last few years.”

Keziah expressed that while she held to the same “biblical principles” as her parents, she perceived a key difference to be the generation gap between herself and her parents. She explained that the challenges that she faces now are different to when her parents were in their early twenties. This has resulted in experiencing greater difficulty in upholding these principles, and therefore feeling more compassionate towards other young adults who fail to meet such standards:

“I think there are some views that I’m probably...not necessarily more liberal about, but probably more compassionate about, or a little bit more realistic? Just because I think the struggles that I’m up against now are very different to the struggles that my parents had. So, that can be quite different in the sense that my parents will sort of be a little bit more harsh on certain subjects.”

Most of the interviewees understood their faith to be very similar to that of their parents, however they were better able to articulate the differences. Most of them described their parents as more conservative and religious than they themselves were. They saw their own faith as being more dynamic, more authentic, more realistic, and even more spiritual. This supports the idea that all of the interviewees had internalised their own faith and saw their faith as separate from that of their parents.

10.2.3. Themes in Answer to the Second Research Question: What factors do young adults perceive as influencing the development of their faith and spirituality?

Influence of Parents

The interviewees who had been brought up with Christian parents expressed that their parents had had a significant influence on their faith development. The most commonly mentioned way that their parents had influenced their faith was the environments that their parents had exposed them to. They acknowledged that their parents had created an environment of faith in their home in ways that either implicitly or explicitly communicated the importance of their Christian faith. Lois talked about some of the ways that faith was brought into her home:

“Prayer life has always has always been part of my family – like saying grace at meals, etcetera, but nothing – nothing too huge. Both of my parents are quite quiet in that sense, but it’s always been there, and it’s never been in doubt that it was there.”

Many of the other interviewees also mentioned the idea that faith had “always been there” in their family. It had been something constant, and part of their lives like the furniture in their houses. Lois also mentions her parents more explicit socialisation of her faith,

“...my parents would always answer any questions we had, and be very open. It was always a very discussion-based thing.”

She and others described the kind of relationship where matters of faith were open to discussion and that this was a contributing factor to their own faith development. Only two out of the eight interviewees with a Christian upbringing said that faith and religion were not topics that they often discussed with their parents.

The other environments that their parents had exposed them to were Christian schools and attendance at church. Exposure to these environments would be far less likely without Christian parents. Lois describes the faith environments in her childhood as follows,

“I think both silently - just the way they act – parents do that and kids pick up on it. Also in the fact that they made choices to send me to Catholic schools. And had a big input in helping me...they did all this education on top of religious education, if that makes sense? At school there was always: this is what’s being believed, and why we do what we do...”

Jade also acknowledged that without the input of her parents and the environments they chose for her, she might not have chosen faith for herself,

“Well, I wouldn’t have been brought up to know about religion, or my religion – or anything really if it had not been for them. We went to church when I was a child, every week. I went to a religious school. All of my friends are religious. It’s just the way we live. It’s everything really.”

As well as environmental exposure, a couple of the interviewees talked about other implicit ways that their parents influenced their faith, such as Lois’s statement from above, “*parents do that and kids pick up on it*”. According to Rupert, it was the way that his parents treated others that led him to take Christianity seriously,

“I went out and researched all these different religions and philosophical ideas and all that jazz. But I think that it’s mostly the way that Mum and Dad taught me to treat other people meant that my faith kind of clicked a bit more – if you know what I mean?”

Keziah’s parents were the most involved in explicitly influencing their children’s faith compared to what the other interviewees described. It seems that the example her parents set in their actions also had a significant impact,

“My Dad, all of his advice is mainly based on the bible or based around some sort of biblical principle that he’s wanted to implement in his family. My parents have set up the entire family...down to roles of parenting, roles of marriage, to sort of, biblical principles. So yeah, very, very, very Christian family!”

From the religion of parents to internalising faith

For the majority of participants who have Christian parents, they described a time when their faith did comprise mainly of attendance on Sundays with their parents. For most, this was how they described their childhood and early adolescent experience of faith. It was

not something that they actively questioned or practiced for themselves. As young adults, it was no longer something that had to be encouraged by their parents, rather, they were clear that they had made their own choices regarding their faith and Christian living.

Frieda: *"I think most of my life I was very much like go to church on Sunday, and then live my life for the rest of the week....without God, like, without really acknowledging him. I just didn't have much of a rooted faith in me."*

Rupert: *"When I was younger it was go to church with your parents and pretend that the pews were submarines, and as I got older it turned more into go to church because I've got no idea what's going on with my faith and I probably should. And then it moved on to the realisation that Jesus is actually in the Eucharist and you go in and you're eating him and receiving him, and it becomes more...this is amazing. This is something that I should be at...because I want to be at, and I know that...I'm always going to receive that love."*

Angeline: *"I think as a child and as a – as a young teenager I was a Christian because of my family. I don't think that it really affected the way that I was living. But now it's – it's probably the top priority in my life - what God's doing."*

Each interviewee had a similar way of describing the changes in their faith from when they were younger up until the present. Although each of their stories are idiosyncratic and unique, this theme of their faith now being their choice was prominent. These choices regarding their faith often included which church to go to and the degree of their involvement. Many of them had a personal prayer routine, or practice of worship regardless of their parents' expressions of faith.

Influence of Mentors

Mentors outside of the immediate family were referred to as an important part of faith development, and often played a key role in the interviewees developing their faith beyond the bounds of attending church on Sundays with their parents. Usually, these influential people were leaders in church, such as youth workers, pastors and clergy members. Sometimes they were part of a bible college or Christian school. Harry attempted to explain the influence of his pastor,

"I think, the main thing would be just talking things over...in the earlier stages he'd be pinpointing out, "look at where you are now, and look at who you were a few months ago". Yeah, he's just being really good at making me reflect, and

pointing out times where...the Spirit has been moving as well, and I've been growing."

Mentors were trusted individuals to whom the participants could turn to for advice and also support through difficult times. Sharlise found a mentor in the principle of a bible school that she had previously attended,

"...we're still in close contact now, and so she's been my mentor for a few years, so she's been with me through a crucial part of my growth and my faith and understanding of who God has created me to be..."

Rupert listed a variety of people who had influenced his faith development,

"Let's see...there was my confirmation teacher, and the people who are the Catholic Youth Team. Um, and quite a few priests who I've talked to, and nuns – who have been amazing."

For Viola, the support she received from her church mentors has been crucial for helping her work through difficult issues in her life and for maintaining her faith:

"I think...part of it is supporting me as a person, in that I've had depression and anxiety issues. And so through supporting me in that, through God, and praying for me and helping me with things like that...it's become a bit easier for me to learn to trust God."

Viola's mentors have played a dual role in assisting her faith development, and helping her cope with anxiety and depression. For most interviewees, their mentors do not only address 'spiritual' issues, but offer support in other areas as well.

The role of Church: Interconnected

Ten out of twelve interviewees were heavily involved in a church, and all twelve had been at some stage of their lives. Most of the interviewees were clear that church means more than attendance every Sunday. It was their main social network, and their community. Some of the participants were attending church several times a week, because of their involvement in helping with the youth group, or playing in the music band. Some also attended Bible College, which functioned as an extension of their church community. Lois articulated that for her, church is interconnected into every part of her life, with Sunday Mass as a foundation (but not the sole activity),

"Like I said before, Sunday Mass is always a constant undercurrent. Some weeks, because I'm part of a band, I'll be playing something - three youth rallies, or something like that. So that can be pretty busy, on the whole. I like integrating it with

my social life. I don't see my social life, and my school life, and my religious life as different. I see them all as interconnected."

This sense of interconnection was true for several of the participants. Some described the weekly events of church as having a grounding influence on their faith and providing a routine for their lives. Viola described feeling "weird" during the holidays where there was no youth programme and no evening church service. Angeline explained that she was going through a period of feeling distant from God. She reasoned that it must be the summer period in which there are fewer church services, fewer young adults programmes, and Bible College is closed,

"...cell groups close down over the summer, and youth group, and college, and so during term time, it's like all of my life is church, bible college, youth group, so, just having that shut down for a wee while I just feel kind of...spaced out a wee bit I guess."

For many of the interviewees, church provided a community of social support and friendship. Many of the female interviewees described the importance of having strong, supportive friendships as part of their church network. Often these friendships are forged in small group environments, Bible study groups, or church band. Keziah described her Bible study group as her primary place of social support,

"I find that prayer time actually not only is: yes they'll pray for me and I'll pray for them, but also, it's kind of an advice-topic session, like if there's things that are really heavy that are going on in our lives, we'll help each other out – we'll actually really talk about it, and it's a really big difference from the years when I wasn't really a Christian in that I definitely didn't have an emotional and spiritual support group like I do now."

These groups become a rich source of emotional and spiritual support. As Keziah describes, they do not only study the Bible and pray together, but provide a safe place to confide in each other and be heard. Esther explained that university can be a difficult place to maintain her faith, and has benefitted from the support that she has found in a Christian group on campus,

"As well as going to church, I'm a member of [Christian student group], and we meet together on Wednesday nights for Bible study, and eat a meal together. Being in a smaller group with other Christians at Uni is a way we can support each other and just...help each other to grow in faith."

Faith as a Priority: Maintaining a Relationship

Just as church is described as something that goes beyond Sundays, many of the interviewees also described their faith as being something that wasn't only expressed through church attendance, but was something that they aspired to prioritise in their daily lives. All of the interviewees communicated that their faith or spirituality was very important to them and affected various aspects of their lives. For example, Angeline and Lois described the impact of their faith on both relational and vocational domains:

Angeline: *"It's, the foundation for all the decisions I make. I'm studying what I'm studying [counselling at Bible College] because of my faith, and it impacts the way I treat people, the decisions that I make. The way I live my life."*

Lois: *"Like I said before, it's interconnected, it's a huge part of my life. My faith influences how I talk to other people, how I go about my studies, how I go about my work; moral decisions I make. Yeah, it's everything."*

Rupert described the change from simply attending church with his parents, to highly valuing his faith:

"I mean, a while ago faith was just something that, you know, I went to church every Sunday with my parents, or it was the people I hung out with. Now it's a bit more like, what's my mission, my purpose? And I guess it's the way that I try and live my life in general. So for me that should take top priority."

Simon was raised in the Rātana church, but has since departed from any one religious affiliation. Instead, he practices a personal spirituality, which he described as being very important in his life when asked about the significance of his faith and spirituality.

Simon: *"Very important. I think...most of my decisions are made, around what I believe in. And, quite often I always find myself coming back to them. Thinking that – if I do this, how will it affect me? Or, how does that run with my beliefs?"*

As well as understanding that their faith and spirituality were very important, many of the participants described practices that encouraged their faith development and maintained their connection with God. For the eleven out of twelve Christian participants, these practices were often based around church, such as regularly attending worship, and bible study groups.

Private practices included taking time out of their busy schedule to pray, read the bible and reflect on life. For those who played musical instruments, they saw their music times as spaces to worship God. This was the case for Frieda,

“...music helps me a lot, like worship music really helps me to connect with God, because I’m quite musical...probably the times I feel most connected to God are when I’m worshipping and singing to him.”

Faith maintaining activities that the participants listed were usually a combination of activities practiced in their own time and activities that occurred within a social context – usually the context of church. Sharlise described her activities:

“I read my bible, I worship, I play my guitar, I have friends around me, I have people around me that pray for me. I actively seek God when I wake up in the morning.”

Esther also described the routines that she had for maintaining her faith,

“...persevering with reading the bible and praying, and church. I always really feel God’s, like, awesome power, and his love when I’m in...an amazing, environmental wonder – beauty in creation, beauty in the world that’s around us.”

Some of the interviewees attended Bible College, and described their studies as contributing to their faith development and their spiritual well-being. Harry described how his levels of diligence in study affect the way he perceives his connection with God,

“I feel close to God when I’m...doing things right, I guess. So, for me when I’m actually studying. When I’m knocking out a few good hours of study and I know I’m doing my best. As in, I feel close to God because I know that God can be able to move through me when I’m doing my best.”

This suggests that there is a feeling of disconnect when he is not “doing his best. A number of the other interviewees seemed to experience similar performance mentality with regard to prioritising their faith and their connection with God. Whilst they believed that God loved them, they perceived that their actions and the commitment that they acted out had a direct bearing on how close they felt to God. Sharlise described the importance of showing her devotion to God,

“These things all support my faith, and I think without these things it just wouldn’t work, because there’d be no commitment back to him, and if I’m not committed back to God - devoted to God...I’m not going to find him.”

Rupert explained that his ability to cope with his tremendously busy schedule was to keep God as his number one priority, however, that his faith practices tended to waver if things started to go well and he failed to make such an effort,

“I guess for me I start to falter most when things start going well, actually. If something’s going really well and life’s good...you start to get a bit cocky and think

that you don't need God. For me that's why it's important to make the effort and go to Mass, or go to adoration."

Others also described a constant battle with becoming "slack" or sometimes failing to make the effort with their personal faith practices. For Esther, she felt that her devotion suffered when she became busy with work and study. She described the priority of her faith in this way:

"I'd like to say its number one, but ultimately, there are times when it gets pushed aside because of stress, or work, or study, and I really need to make a point of going, "whoa, that's not how it should be". And recognising that it should be number one."

The paradox with this issue was that interviewees described the need to express their commitment and maintain regular faith practices in order to feel close to God, however, there was also an understanding that God was like a friend who is there for them unconditionally. Keziah explained that even though she might sometimes struggle to make the effort with her prayer times, she felt able to approach God at any time,

"I think there are times that I feel further away from God, just because if things become busy and I don't feel like, you know, praying or whatever, or it's a time in life where I feel stressed, but... I feel like that's my relationship with God, you know, I'm not going to be perfectly close to him every single day, but ultimately, I can come back to him. And he'll love me just as much as he did before."

Although Harry seemed the most concerned with being diligent with his studies, he explained that he'd heard others say that God was always close, no matter whether he is doing everything right or not,

"I remember someone saying, God always stays the same distance. When you feel close to God it's just you developing more relationship. Kind of, making it stronger. So, with that in mind, I know that even when I don't feel close to God, He's still there."

Jade was the one Christian participant who did not mention a high degree of personal practice. However, she also appeared to be the most settled in how close she felt to God. Although admitting that she didn't pray daily, her response was:

"I think he's aware of what's going on in my life and the things that I'm thinking, I mean, obviously when I need help, or am thankful for something, I pray, but, just day to day I don't...I think he gets it."

Simon did not conceptualise his spirituality to be attached to any particular social group, therefore all his practices were personal and individual. He described regular meditation and reflection as his way of feeling connected and grounded:

“I meditate every morning, and...not in a traditional sort of way, quite often it’s just having time quietly to myself to think about, where I am, where I’m at, and just...it’s a very personal thing...that’s sort of how I stay connected.”

Neither Simon nor Jade appeared to experience the angst about doing enough to feel close to God that the others tended to experience from time to time.

Questioning Faith: The importance of questions and doubts in faith development

Faith was often defined as trusting God, belief without sensory confirmation, and choosing to believe in times where it’s difficult. Most of the interviewees expressed the notion that faith occurs in the absence of empirical evidence. Both Esther and Viola described faith in these terms.

Esther: *“You do need the concrete evidence, but...it’s often not available...so, faith is just faith, it’s just determination to believe even when it’s hard.”*

Viola: *“Even on the days when it’s not clear and you can’t see...anything, or – you can’t see God, or Jesus, or anything sort of spiritual. It’s having the ability to still continue to believe.”*

Their statements suggest that there are times when it is difficult to believe, and that there may be questions about one’s religion that present a challenge to faith. When asked if they had had questions regarding their faith and religion, only one person said that they had not. For example, when asked about whether they had questioned their faith or spirituality, both Simon and Max were very definite, and positive about the experience of having questions,

Simon: *“Definitely. Quite often actually. Because it’s such a big part of our society, you see it on a daily basis. And...it’s not until quite recently that I actually...thought in detail, about what my spirituality is...and how that’s different to others.”*

Max: *“Yeah definitely, I try and keep that up as much as I can, just always be...really intellectually honest with myself and what it is that I’m thinking.”*

The types of questions that the interviewees had asked were often existential questions about the purpose of life, and whether God exists. Other questions addressed whether their particular religion was really the right one to be following. With this question

often came doubts about whether it was God who was active in their lives, or merely their own imagination or random events.

Harry had thought about many of these questions,

“The kinds of questions that I asked myself has been like, is it the same god in different religions? Um you know, just how people connect to God, is that just how there are different religions? And also the classic: does God exist? Has it been God that has been moving in my life? Has it just been coincidence?”

Others expressed that they hadn’t ever doubted the existence of God, however, they had had questions regarding the details of Christianity: What God expects of them, or why the church teaches certain doctrines or moral codes. Angeline described these kinds of questions,

“I don’t think it’s ever been a case of: is God real, is this actually what I believe? It’s been more like, questioning finer details, like some of those ethical questions that are huge...like gay marriage and stuff.”

Although these questions meant that maintaining belief had been a challenge at times, it appears that experiencing uncertainty, and asking questions was not corrosive to faith. On the contrary, some interviewees expressed that a time of questioning during their teenage years had lead them to internalise and own their faith.

Esther described her time at a Christian gap year programme as one that challenged her to face questions that she had never asked. At this programme, students took classes and were encouraged to think in depth about their faith. They also participated in overseas mission and volunteer activities that were funded by labour they were required to undertake as part of the programme, such as fruit picking. Throughout the interview, Esther referred to her year spent in this programme as the most impacting of her life, and exceedingly influential to her faith development,

“I know that through intermediate, through high school, my faith was still essentially something I hadn’t questioned much and hadn’t really grasped, hadn’t really owned for myself. It wasn’t until [the gap year programme] where I had to really choose one way or the other and...question everything with other people and support, so, yeah, I was able to come through that.”

Lois also described a time of questioning faith as being one that brought her to a place of owning it for herself,

“I think faith that will only believe isn’t faith at all...but you get to a point in your life where you’re like, “hey, why do I believe what I believe?” Where does it

come from? What's going on? Do I agree with this? You actually have to test it yourself and kind of own it, in a sense."

Although most of the participants had asked questions to varying degrees, they remained committed to their faith. When asked about whether their questions were resolved, some interviewees described what factors had helped them reach some resolution. Surprisingly, many accepted that questions would continue to be part of their faith.

Keziah: *"...because it is a faith, and because like I said, there's no possible way you can prove it, um, I think I'll always have semi-doubts...but...I feel like my life is surrounded by people that are way wiser than me. Hopefully this rubs off on me eventually..."*

Rupert: *"...so I ventured into what philosophies I could find and looked through different religions. And even after I kind of decided, yup, that makes sense to me I – I still questioned because, you know...it's human nature to question...I guess."*

Harry: *"The ones that needed resolving were resolved, so it's like, was God moving in my life? But one's such like, is it the same god in different religions, or does God exist, it's like...it's like, well for the one: does God exist, it's kind of like the whole faith thing: I don't actually know. I know, but I don't actually know."*

The above statements suggest that questions will continue to crop up, and they have accepted this as a valid part of their Christian experience.

A few of the others seemed less comfortable with the idea of ongoing questions. Sharlise, Jade and Viola were more certain that there was resolution, and that they were not currently questioning their faith. Viola explained how she had resolved her questions through looking to her social support network and by trusting the authority of the Bible,

"I've had people help me to realise that no, this definitely was a God-thing. And, other questions as well, like, how do I know this is real, and stuff...so many of the answers are in the Bible. They're all the big questions and whatever."

Experiencing God – collective and individual moments

Sometimes the interviewees attributed a specific experience that signified a turning point in the development of their faith. For example, Esther remembers her time in the gap year programme as one that changed the course of her life and her faith (see above). These experiences that promoted turning points in the participants' faith often (but not always) occurred in the context of being in worship, prayer, at a camp or a conference with others.

Max described his first time at a nationwide Christian camp as being particularly significant to his faith development,

“It was my real first encounter and understanding that God isn’t just some sort of idea, but like, a real thing that wants to talk to people and wants to be part of peoples’ lives.”

Viola spoke of camps and retreats as being a very significant part of her faith. When asked about spiritual experiences, she talked about camps,

“I think the big ones are the ones where actually, you’re just away with a group of Christians and, yeah, big stuff happens.”

Later in the interview, she described a moment of being able to mourn for a family member who had passed away some years before. She described this experience as being a move of God. Sharlise also mentioned camps and retreats as being places for spiritual experiences,

“Events and spaces where people have prayed and sort out a time to give God the space to move. And God has obviously and clearly moved in my life...”

The participants also described moments in solitude where they had had a spiritual experience, or felt connected to God. As well as her mention of Christian camps and conferences, Sharlise described a moment with God that occurred during a run,

“Just before this phone call, I did a little bit of a workout, then went for a run... there’s this one space that just has a clearing and I just sat down and talked with God, and it’s memorable because...he was definitely there. And, it was just before. And his presence was just, like, there - with me and it was really nice.”

In these personal, spiritual moments, several of the interviewees, like Sharlise, describe feeling a presence, peace, or warmth. Harry described how he felt after a period of frequent prayer,

“...I hadn’t prayed for a while, or anything, and I felt kind of...detached from God. And you know what? I just started praying really intensely for a week or so, and I found after that I was just feeling very...peaceful, constant, but also kind of, comfortable in my own...presence...”

Rupert also talked about the effects of prayer in helping him to cope positively with stress,

“...every now and then I get a good...feeling, you could say. When I’m on the right track, like, sometimes during prayer I’ve been pretty down and just asked for help and guidance, and I’ve always come away strengthened...”

Simon acknowledged that what he often felt was difficult to describe, however, he experiences moments of feeling connected. His answer also seems to echo the feelings of some of the others in that he refers to feelings of warmth, connection, and feeling the presence of something indescribable,

“I wouldn’t say any specific memories, but just a general feeling of...being connected to something not tangible, not physical. Just that feeling that you know something – something is there that you connect with and you feel that warmth. But, it’s not necessarily something that you can describe. Just that feeling that you know that you’re – you’re in the right place. It’s really great. I’m quite lucky, I feel that quite often.”

Coping and Well-being

The contribution of spirituality and faith to well-being was a common experience for at least five out of the twelve participants. For Viola and Frieda, their connection with God and their church network have been instrumental in supporting them through mental illness. Viola attributed the support of her church network and mentors for helping her through her difficulties, and helping her to “trust God”. Frieda’s church had also been a crucial network of support. However, she also described the attainment of a profound freedom from many of her struggles through her personal faith and connection with God:

“God’s on your side, it’s just so much freedom from, worry, from stress, and from...just so many burdens get lifted when you’re able to put your trust in something bigger than yourself and not have to take on every single thing that you worry about on your own...”

She later added,

“Everything – everything I could have ever battled, he’s battled with me, and we’ve conquered it.”

Frieda had found relief from debilitating mental health difficulties, which she attributed to trusting in God, and experiencing spiritual freedom.

Jade described a dark time with depression during her teenage years, and explained that faith has helped her to experience gratitude, and the will to get out of bed each day.

“I was a really dark person through high school, so I know I would not be alive if it weren’t for my faith, and my religion and things. I know that every day that I have now when I wake up is because of my faith, and because I was able to get

through that, so, every day that I wake up and the sun's shining, and it's just another day to be thankful."

Each of these young women experienced their faith and spirituality as something that has helped them to cope and make it through difficult circumstances. Those who hadn't experienced mental health difficulties, still described their faith as being important for their well-being. For example, Rupert attributed regular mass and prayer as having given him the energy to have made it through an intensely busy time in his life. Keziah described the support that she has received amongst her bible study group as helping her to trust God rather than turn to unhealthy methods of coping, such as alcohol. The combination of having a spiritual connection to God, and the social support found in church circles appear have helped these young adults cope with mental illness, stress, and for at least one of them, has prevented them from turning to unhealthy addictions.

Chapter 11. DISCUSSION

This final chapter is organised into six sections. Rather than address each of the research questions in order, I will discuss the quantitative aspects of the study in the first two sections, whilst using the qualitative findings to supplement. In the second two sections I mainly discuss the qualitative findings, and use the quantitative data – particularly the bivariate correlations - to supplement. In section one, the focus is on the associations between faith identity, intrinsic reasons for church attendance, and the religiosity/spirituality variables. The main topic of discussion will be the issue of whether moratorium faith identity is detrimental or beneficial to spiritual development and mental health. Following this, section two provides a brief discussion of the association between social support and mental health. The focus of section three is on the qualitative differences between spirituality and religiosity, including the bivariate associations of spirituality (but not religious commitment) with mental health, the social variables and some of the demographic variables. In section four the main findings from the thematic analysis will be discussed with an emphasis on the apparent interplay of social and personal factors in the development of spirituality/religiosity. Section five addresses the strengths and limitations of this study, including future directions for research in the field of the psychology of religion and spirituality in New Zealand. Finally, in section six I propose some implications of the current study for those who are interested in the spiritual development of young people.

11.1. Associations with Measures of Religious Commitment and Spirituality, and the Predictive Power of Faith Identity

The multivariate analyses showed that out of all of the faith identity factors, only diffusion and moratorium were predictive of spirituality, and only diffusion was predictive of religious commitment. Higher reports of questioning and exploring faith (moratorium) predicted lower spirituality, while higher reports of apathy or disinterest (diffusion), rather unsurprisingly, predicted lower spirituality and religious commitment. However, intrinsic reasons for church was a stronger predictor of spirituality and religious commitment than either diffusion or moratorium. These results are generally congruent with findings from Hunsburger, Patt and Pancer (2001), who found that global faith identity diffusion and moratorium both were associated with participant reports of becoming less religious in the previous three years, and Markstrom-Adams, Hofstra and Dougher (1994) found that ideological diffusion was the strongest predictor of church attendance.

Intrinsic reasons for church attendance referred to participating in religious activities for the value it adds to one's faith, fulfilling commitments one might have, such as leading the youth group, and also valuing it as a communal experience (the concept that their faith is not a solo undertaking). Whereas extrinsic reasons for church attendance were those that referred to participation for the social benefits, such as catching up with friends. Having intrinsic reasons for church would also suggest that one recognises the inherent value of the teachings of that church, and presumably this would enforce one's religious commitment. Intrinsic reasons for church attendance was also a stronger predictor of spirituality than it was for religious commitment.

According to Ellison (1991), public and private religious activities may serve to strengthen spiritual and religious beliefs, therefore it makes sense that if your motivations for attending church are to grow spiritually and understand religious scriptures you might derive the fullest benefit from going (with regard to spiritual growth and understanding religious scriptures/teaching). The interviews gave some evidence that this may be the case. Ten out of the twelve interview participants described their spiritual/religious practices as something that went beyond attending church on Sundays, and was integrated into their daily life. There was some indication that the relationship between motivation for church participation and levels of spirituality and religiosity may have been bidirectional. As the participants came to own their faith, this meant that they chose their level of church involvement. Hence, a growth in spirituality may have meant a growth in intrinsic reasons for church involvement, which in turn influenced levels of spirituality and religious commitment. It is also important to note that the quantitative data showed that higher intrinsic motivations for church attendance was significantly associated with higher extrinsic motivations for church. This supports Allport's notion that motivations are not purely intrinsic or purely extrinsic (Allport & Ross, 1967; Gorsuch, 1984).

11.1.1 Is Doubt Beneficial or Detrimental to Spirituality?

The literature is divided on the effects of doubting and questioning on levels of spirituality. Classic theorists support the notion that doubt has a similar function in spiritual development that crisis has in the formation of an achieved identity (Allport, 1950; Erikson, 1956; 1968; Fowler, 1981; Marcia, 1966). Transitions between faith stages, according to Fowler (1981) are often accompanied by doubts about one's former faith identity, including the meanings of religious narratives, symbols and sacraments. For example, going from mythic-literal faith (stage two) to synthetic-conventional faith (stage three) may accompany

doubts about the literal truth of biblical narratives, or about how God could allow a world in which suffering exists and justice is often not carried out. People who develop an individuated-reflective faith (stage 4) are described as experiencing a sense of disequilibrium and doubt about their religious worldview, as well as the beliefs of people who may have had a significant part in shaping their worldview (Fowler, 1984).

Allport (1950) wrote about the nature of doubt, and argues that there are different kinds of doubt, which may impact whether or not it contributes to spiritual development or is detrimental to faith. He wrote that someone whose expectation of religious narratives is that they should be literally and empirically true (i.e. someone who expects faith claims to always be scientifically viable) will struggle to develop faith (Allport, 1950, p102, p112). He contrasted this with a type of doubt that precedes and accompanies mature faith. Firstly, he argued that reaching a faith commitment requires an intelligent enquiry into the incredulities of such a commitment, “Mature belief...grows painfully out of the alternating doubts and affirmations that characterize productive thinking” (Allport, 1950, p122). This suggests that this type of doubt requires an individual to be intellectually honest, and to address their doubts. This leads to his second point that intelligent faith has a quest or exploratory intention. It entails a search for the sacred, to use Pargament’s (1996) phrasing, and that such a search is (paradoxically) connected to its destination. The sacred is encountered in the act of the search (Allport, 1950, p136). According to these classic theorists, faith, and certain types of doubt are not polar opposites. Having doubts may motivate a more authentic search for deeper grounds for faith, and may provide an impetus for encountering the sacred.

Tsang and McCullough (2003) conceptualised this “quest orientation” as the third type of religious motivation after Allport’s (Allport & Ross, 1967) distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic. They discussed that a quest orientation may be more mature than intrinsic motivation. Research about the association between religious orientation and helping behaviour has suggested that intrinsically motivated individuals are more sensitive than the extrinsically motivated to the core teachings of their religious tradition and have high ideals. However, this can result in higher prejudice in response to ethical dilemmas because of their desire to uphold these ideals. Those with a quest orientation are more open to diverse perspectives and may exhibit less prejudice because they are less concerned with loyalty to their religious tradition (Tsang & McCullough, 2003).

Additional recent research also supports the notion that doubt is important for achieving a mature spiritual identity. Leak (2009) reported that in a small sample of college students, moratorium was associated with higher faith development (according to a

quantitative, stages of faith measure) compared with the other identity statuses. Keisling and Sorrel (2009) conceptualised adult ideological identity status in terms of salience and flexibility. Those who were moratorium or achieved in their faith identity were those who possessed more role flexibility in their spiritual identities. According to the authors' way of conceptualising maturity, doubt or exploration that promotes role flexibility appeared to be beneficial for participants' self-evaluations and spiritual development.

In contrast, other research supports the notion that one of the reasons that certain young adults do not lose their faith and religious affiliation is by *not* doubting. Smith and Snell (2009) found that one of the most important predictive factors for young adults who were classified as being the most devoted to their faith than others in that cohort was having few or no doubts. This factor was not quite as significant as the importance of faith to their parents, parental attendance, and the young person highly valuing their faith; however, it was very important if the young person reported few or no religious experiences. Galek and colleagues (2007) proposed that it is likely that individuals react differently to doubt, and the outcomes of doubt may depend on age and stage of faith. It may be the case that young adults in particular are at an age and stage where they are searching for certainty and stability, and it may be that existential doubt is particularly disturbing. This would explain why moratorium faith identity predicted lower spirituality in the present study. This will be further elaborated in the next chapter regarding the association between moratorium and mental health.

Smith and Snell (2009) reported that having religious experiences was an important factor for young adults who were the most religiously devoted. It is possible that lacking religious experiences may provide an explanation for cases where doubt results in a loss of faith. It might seem like a strange topic for psychology, and indeed, this was not a focus for this thesis; however, it has received attention by various theorists and researchers (Gillespie, 1979; James, 1929; Spilka, Hood, & Gorsuch, 1985; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 1998). Spiritual experiences are also common to traditional Māori medicine in which healers engage with the spiritual realm in order to bring about balance and well-being to their clients (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2013).

The qualitative findings of the present study suggest that there is some validity to the importance of religious or spiritual experiences. Every one of the interviewees mentioned a spiritual experience of some description. Max explained that when he attended a large Christian camp as a young teen, he experienced that God was real for the first time – “more than an idea”. Sharlise looks for God in the mundane moments of life, such as when going

for a run, and praying first thing each morning. She spoke of an experience of feeling that God was close to her and spoke to her. Both Lois and Angeline mentioned times of prayer where they felt particularly “blessed”, or that the Holy Spirit was “moving”. Rupert described feeling loved when he understood the meaning of the sacrament of the Eucharist, and feeling a sense of “being on the right track” during prayer. In contrast, Simon who did not experience God through any religious symbolism or practice, described a similar feeling during his personal meditation times. Perhaps the most dramatic instance, was Frieda’s description of being ‘healed’ of depression, through praying in desperation and listening to worship music one evening when she was feeling particularly distressed. She described a sense that chains were falling from her body.

Pargament (1996; 1999b) argued that the definition of the sacred differs between individuals, and it is interesting to note that the spiritual experiences that the interviewees shared were diverse, although all but one believed that their encounters were with the Christian God. Faith and belief, it seems, are not merely intellectual propositions (Smith, 1979), and may also extend beyond behaviour. An important part of faith and belief may also be the ‘proof’ of encountering the sacred, and knowing, as Simon and Rupert alluded to, that one is in the right place and on the right path.

The interview findings also suggest that doubting and questioning faith was an important component for internalising faith. Having doubts appears to have motivated the participants to examine beliefs which they only held because of their parents’ religious affiliation. For example, Rupert, Lois and Angeline explained that they did not often think about their faith before adolescence. Rather, it was something that was easily copied from their parents, but didn’t intrude on their daily lives (except in the various forms of socialisation and influence that was provided by their parents, and in the different environments that encouraged faith). Asking questions and feeling insecure about their beliefs appeared to precipitate this time of questioning and drawing closer to a committed spiritual and religious identity. Further, the majority of the interviewees expressed a positive view of questioning faith. Lois expressed, “*I think Aquinas said faith and reason. And that’s one of the core bases of the church: that faith and reason go hand and hand.*” With regard to questioning, Max’s opinion was, “*I try and keep that up as much as I can, just always be...really intellectually honest with myself...*”.

11.1.2. Why is a Moratorium Faith Identity Detrimental to Mental Health?

Moratorium was the only identity factor that was related to mental health. Higher moratorium was associated with lower psychological well-being and higher anxiety. A Sobel test revealed that the association between spirituality and anxiety was mediated by moratorium faith identity, which suggests participants who were lower in spirituality may have been more anxious because they were more likely to be experiencing higher moratorium, which directly predicted higher anxiety. As discussed above, young adults in the current sample were likely to decrease in spirituality if they experienced a time of being uncertain and engaging in exploration about matters of faith and spirituality. This supports previous studies that have found that doubting is associated with lower well-being (Krause et al., 1999; Pearce et al., 2013). Galek et al (2007) found that religious doubt was associated with a range of psychopathological symptoms including anxiety. They also found that these outcomes appeared to decrease with age. Doubt was associated with anxiety to a lesser extent in older adults compared with young adults. The authors noted that this finding is consistent with the likes of Fowler (1981), who found that his older participants whom he classified as being in the later stages of faith development were accepting of paradox and uncertainty. While there are few studies that examine non-religiousness as more than the negative form of religiousness (Hall, Koenig, & Meador, 2008), there is evidence to suggest that young people who experience the highest mental health are either strongly religious, or strongly non-religious, while weak religious affiliation or nominal beliefs are associated with the lower levels of mental health (Donelson, 1999). Hence, strength and certainty of belief may be more important to mental well-being than being religious or non-religious. Findings from the National Study of Youth and Religion also consistently showed that young people who were the most devoted to their faith (particularly Mormon, White Evangelical Protestants, and African American Protestants) experienced more positive outcomes including higher psychological well-being (Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith & Snell, 2009). The current study suggests that those who rated themselves highly in personal spirituality had reduced inclinations towards exploration and doubt. These participants were subsequently less likely to have anxiety.

Ellison (1991) found that participants who had the strongest sense of religious coherence experienced higher levels of mental health. She discussed that the impact of religiosity and spirituality on mental well-being may be indirect, and rather, that this association exists because of the sense of coherence that they provide. This sense of coherence may also be more necessary to young people in doctrinal religions, such as Christianity. There is some research to suggest that for adherents of Universalism (a non-

doctrinal religion), intellectual doubting and exploration was associated with greater mental health (Elliott & Hayward, 2007). It is possible that doubting and questioning beliefs is more distressing for members of religions in which orthodoxy is a core value (Smith, 1979). Religions of orthodoxy may also provide a greater impetus for a sense of existential cohesion, and hence, doubting may feel more threatening because it erodes this sense of cohesion. In addition, young people with characteristics of Fowler's (1981) "synthetic-conventional" faith stage may further be unable to consolidate doubts which cause a high level of cognitive dissonance, since the main task of this stage is to construct a coherent faith identity. Furthermore, this identity is heavily influenced by significant others, including religious leaders and mentors. Hence, if a young person perceives that doubt undermines their faith identity, they may also feel like they are betraying those who matter the most to them. Therefore, it seems logical they are more likely to experience higher anxiety and lower psychological well-being.

So far it seems that moratorium faith identity has few redeeming features when it comes to mental and emotional health, yet these results seem to stand in sharp contrast with the interview results discussed above. For the interviewees, it is curious to wonder how they might have rated themselves on levels of spirituality, psychological well-being, and anxiety during their times of asking difficult questions. During those times of questioning they may not have felt strong in their faith. Magyar-Russel, Deal and Brown (2014) discussed research regarding doubt in American emerging adults. They noted that amongst some religious adherents there is a narrative of faith deconstruction. They explained that as well as milestones such as leaving the parental home, these young adults are expected to leave their ideological home – not with the intent that they will discard religion, but that they might reconstruct their religious worldviews as something that is more authentic and independent of their adolescent social network (Magyar-Russel, Deal, & Brown, 2014).

Hence, if young people are able to navigate this transition successfully, this would suggest that doubting and exploration was beneficial in the long term, even if it felt like an identity crisis in the short term. *"Accordingly, doubt itself is not the culprit of dis-ease; rather, it is how emerging adults integrate doubt with their spiritual and religious worldviews is of ultimate significance."* (Magyar-Russel, Deal & Brown, 2014, p51). This suggests that the environment and religious contexts that young people find themselves in may have a large impact on whether or not they are able to cope with moratorium on a psychological and a spiritual level. A question for further study is, if the majority of people closest to a young adult are perceived to be religious devotees, to what extent do young adults

feel alienated from these individuals when they begin to question their faith? The potential consequences of wrestling with doubt or exploring other religious traditions may impact not only one's personal spirituality and religiosity, but also their social connectedness.

Finally, there is also a possible methodological explanation for the apparent discrepancy in the results between the quantitative and qualitative findings on the role of questioning and doubt. Having at least some questions and doubts about religion was part of most of the interview participants' experiences. For some of the interviewees, questioning motivated them to take their faith more seriously. While the quantitative results have shown that questioning faith predicts lower personal spirituality, most of the interviewees reflected on their experiences of questioning faith as positive, or an experience that had motivated them to take their faith more seriously. The quantitative results are cross-sectional, therefore they give a snapshot of a moment in time, while the interview conversations flowed between past and present. The quantitative data suggests that at the time that young people experienced doubt and exploration (moratorium), their personal spirituality and mental well-being was likely to decrease. In the qualitative data, the participants gave an autobiographical account of the role that questioning had in their faith journey. They perceived questioning to have been important part of the journey. The resolution of this part of their journeys may have resulted in a more internalised faith identity and an understanding that questioning was an important path for getting there. Therefore, both sets of results can be seen as complementary, and as illuminating different perspectives of one story.

11.2. Social Connectedness and Mental Health

The majority of participants in the current study reported that their church was their community. At the bivariate level, community connectedness was associated with higher psychological well-being and lower anxiety, but only predicted lower depression in the multivariate analyses along with attachment quality with parents and peers. Depression was not associated with any of the religiosity or identity variables, however, it is possible that community connectedness (in reference to church) functioned as a religiosity variable, in particular, the social support side of religiosity. Higher connectedness to community was a stronger predictor of lower depression compared with higher relationship quality with parents and peers. As discussed above, this may be reflective of the stage of life that these young people are going through. Greater individuation from parents, and perhaps, their high school peers, whilst forming deeper friendships with work colleagues, classmates at university, flatmates, and romantic partners. This might also apply to church, where parents have far

less of an influence on attendance in this time of life. Research into the area of how parents socialise their children also suggests that their direct influence may be more significant early on in their childrens' lives (Smith & Denton, 2005), whilst this becomes increasingly indirect as children become adolescents. Parents decide on their childrens' environments (Nelson, 2014), and these environments may exert a more direct influence on the process of adolescents internalising their faith. This exact point was alluded to by a number of the interview participants.

The interview findings also assist in explaining the predictive power of community connectedness in depression. For the majority of the interviewees, their church programmes and social networks were a large part of their faith, and their daily lives. Several also expressed the importance of this network in coping with mental illness. For example, Viola discussed the importance of having mentors to help her through depression and anxiety. Similarly, some of the participants described their church network as not only contributing to their spiritual growth, but having a grounding influence in their week. Viola and Angeline mentioned feeling 'weird' during the holiday period where there were fewer church events throughout the week. Some of the literature has also found this association between the social side of religiosity and depression (Good & Willoughby, 2006; Koenig, 2009; Pearce et al., 2003). Young adults with depression for whom their churches provide their main source of social support may be more likely to experience a worsening of their symptoms when they feel that members of that community are judging and unsupportive (Pearce et al., 2003).

Relationship quality with parents and peers was a strong predictor of psychological well-being, anxiety, and to a slightly lesser extent, symptoms of depression. The contribution of relationship quality to mental health in the current study is not surprising and confirms much of the literature which strongly suggests that social support from significant others, and maintaining quality relationships with parents in late adolescence and emerging adulthood robustly predicts mental health (Field, Diego, & Sanders, 2002; McKinney & Clarke, 2008; Van Wel, Ter Bogt, & Raaijmakers, 2002). Late adolescence to emerging adulthood is a period of transitioning from dependence on parents to greater individuation and independence (McNamara Barry & Abo-Zena, 2014). The literature suggests that although this time may be characterised by this greater independence, relationships with parents remain important for emotional adjustment (Nelson, 2014). Young adults are also more likely to spend greater amounts of time with friends and less with their immediate family, thus their peers may become their most vital source of social support and religious socialisation (McNamara Barry & Christoffersen, 2014). There have been several studies which support the findings from

the present study, and show that perceived quality of relationship with parents and peers in adolescence and emerging adulthood predicts better emotional adjustment, faster adaptation to college/university life, higher self-esteem, less anxiety and fewer depressive symptoms (Amsden & Greenberg, 1987; Kenny & Sirin, 2006; Laible, Carlo, & Roesch, 2004; Paterson, Pryor, & Field, 1995). Furthermore, moratorium, which predicted lower psychological well-being and higher anxiety in the current study, was also associated with lower relationship quality with parents and peers. Hence, one of the reasons that moratorium may be harmful to mental health is that it is associated with receiving less social support from the people who matter the most.

11.3. The Differences between Religion and Spirituality

There are several possibilities as to why the measure of spirituality in this study, but not religious commitment was associated with and predicted psychological well-being and anxiety. As previously mentioned, it seems plausible that the participants were able to rate highly on religious commitment (which assessed how important their faith was to them, the instance of having made a commitment to their faith, and whether they identified themselves as religious) without necessarily having strong convictions and beliefs. It is also possible to be inwardly asking questions and doubting whilst still remaining outwardly committed, through behaviours such as church attendance and participating in corporate worship. It is possible that those who rated highly on spirituality experienced something more deep and internal with regard to their faith, since this measure asked about private practices, feelings of peace and connection with God. Furthermore, whilst the association between religious commitment and frequency of church attendance was slightly stronger than that of spirituality, the association between spirituality and intrinsic reasons for church attendance was stronger than religious commitment and intrinsic reasons for church. This supports the notion that in this population, religiosity was slightly more of a behavioural measure, whilst spirituality was more psychological in nature.

In theory, these constructs can be understood to be related to the same destination, the sacred (Pargament, 1999b). In practice they may operate separately. If this was the case, it seems plausible that those who were higher in spirituality, who felt connected to God, engaged in personal prayer, and had a stronger network of beliefs experienced a more secure faith identity. This is supported by the fact that moratorium was a greater negative predictor of spirituality than it was for religious commitment. Hence, those who scored highly in spirituality were less likely to be questioning their faith, which as previously discussed, and is

supported by the literature, is associated with greater psychological well-being (Ellison, 1991; Galek et al., 2007; Krause et al., 1999).

Another possibility is the type of religious affiliation of the participants. The majority were protestant Christians, with Catholics well represented, but very few from any other religious groups. Because Christianity is a religion of orthodoxy, as opposed to orthopraxy (see above for further discussion), it is possible that strength of belief (and lack of moratorium) holds greater importance than for their Jewish and Muslim counterparts.

11.3.1. Association between Spirituality, and Age

The bivariate associations showed that whilst spirituality and religious commitment were significantly and positively associated with one another, it was only a medium-sized correlation. Spirituality was associated with a greater number of the other variables than religious commitment was. For example, none of the social variables were significantly associated with religious commitment. None of the demographic variables were significant in predicting either spirituality or religious commitment, however, age was significant at the bivariate level as being associated with higher levels of spirituality

The fact that the older participants appeared to report higher spirituality is congruent with older theorists such as Fowler (1981) who suggested that age may be correlated with qualitative developments in faith. It also supports findings reported by Smith and Snell (2009) that church participation seemed to decline slightly in emerging adults, but importance of religion slightly increased. In the present study, spirituality may partly tap into more of the personal salience of faith, over public practice. It is also possible that older adolescents have individuated from their parents to a greater extent, and have faith identities that are less reliant on parental input. Religious commitment and frequency of attending can be more easily manipulated by parents, than spirituality.

11.3.2. Qualitative Definitions for Spirituality and Religion

Even more so than the quantitative measures, the qualitative data suggests that overall religiously affiliated young adults perceive spirituality and religiosity to be different concepts. As previously mentioned, Zinnbauer et al (1997) conducted a similar analysis as part of a correlational study designed to understand how a sample of 326 adults defined spirituality and religion. Their two most common ideas for spirituality were referred to by 34% and 36% of participants, while their two main ideas for religion were referred to by 22% and 21% of participants. My sample followed a similar pattern, and interestingly, the main

ideas are comparable to Zinnbauer et al's (1997) findings. According to the qualitative descriptions from the survey, spirituality was considered to be a more relational concept than religiosity. About a quarter of the participants described it as a relationship or connection to God or a Higher Being. This supports Pargament's (1996, 1999b) theory that spirituality is more direct in its relation to the sacred – it encompasses the search for the sacred, and presumably the resulting (potential) encounter with what one considers to be sacred, or the ultimate sacred Other. In contrast, more of the participants described community and group affiliation when referring to religion. Similar to Zinnbauer et al (1997), belief was a major theme for both constructs, although it was more commonly used in descriptions of religiosity. In the current study, when belief was mentioned with regard to spirituality, the language was much more direct about the sacred, therefore definitions tended to incorporate the idea of belief in God or a Higher being. Religion, however, was often described as a system or set of beliefs with more references to group affiliation, community and institutional aspects.

While some of the interviewees' descriptions of spirituality and religiosity did coincide with the definitions in the survey (keeping in mind that the twelve interviewees had also taken the survey), some of the themes were also slightly different. Similarities for spirituality included that it is about a relationship with God, and it is an internal disposition or part of the self. Religion was described by most of the interviewees in similar terms to the survey descriptions, however there was much less of a variety of themes (this makes sense on account of the interview sample being a very small representation of the eighty-seven survey participants). Religiosity was described as being about a connection to a church – however, less of the community side, and more of the historical or institutional aspects of the church. Religiosity was also associated with rules and ritualistic behaviour. Depending on the participants' denomination, religion was perceived to be either positive (Catholic or Anglican) or negative (Non-denominational, Evangelical or Pentecostal).

11.3.3. Discussion of the Relation between Spirituality and Religion

These themes appear to reflect the common dichotomy found in much of the literature where spirituality is understood to be more experiential, individual and authentic, whereas religion is seen to involve the institutional, ritual aspects. It appears that the majority of participants understood these to be different concepts; however for some, it was clear that they overlapped. At times, spirituality was used in the descriptions of religion and religion was used in the descriptions of spirituality. In these cases it appears that religion was seen to provide a framework through which spirituality was expressed.

Although not explicitly stated in their explanations of spirituality and religion, the ways that the interviewees perceived the differences between their own faith and their parents' faith suggested the ways that they perceived the difference between spirituality and religion. Of the nine interviewees who had grown up with Christian parents, most explained the difference between their own and their parents' faith was that they were more spiritual, whilst their parents were more religious. The ways that the interviewees distinguished their faith approach from their parents, also suggests that they viewed spirituality and religion as certain ways to approach Christianity. From this perspective, participants' responses suggested that it is possible to be a spiritual and authentic Christian, or it is possible to be a religious and ritualistic Christian. All the interviewees who made this distinction were in more favour of the former approach. This suggests some awareness of a social discourse, as Ammerman (2013) explains. It is possible that the participants did not classify their own behaviour in terms of spiritual or religious; however, they were aware of the discourse surrounding these two terms: that spirituality is often associated with a more authentic expression of faith, whilst religion is understood to be ritualistic and perhaps a bit stale. The participants seemed to have an idea in their mind of the type of religion that they wanted to avoid (Ammerman, 2013).

The young adults did not necessarily think about their faith, and Christianity in terms of being spiritual or religious. These terms appeared to be used for the benefit of those of a different faith persuasion, or for the purpose of their interview with me. This may be reflective of the fact that churches do not teach about 'religion' or 'spirituality' in general, but about Christianity and the specifics of its creeds and dogmas, sacraments, the teachings of the Bible, the history of church tradition, and how these can or should apply to daily life (according to the nuances of denomination and the cultures of individual congregations). It may be more helpful to consider the interviews in light of the fact that all but one were of the Christian faith, and nine out of eleven participants had grown up with Christian family members. This means that each of the interviewees had experienced the influences of attending a Christian church or youth group (and possibly a Christian education), and thus, their religious worldviews were likely to be reflective of the Christian cultures that they were part of. Hence, the ways they discussed the words "spirituality" and "religion/religiosity" were most likely a reflection of their own Christian worldviews, and more specifically, the denomination that they were affiliated with.

Selvam (2013) gives several ways of defining religiosity and spirituality. He argues for the possibility of "religious-spirituality" in which both terms represent different

approaches towards searching for the sacred (Salvam, 2013, p138). This seems similar to the ways that the interview participants discussed the two terms: that it is possible to be a spiritual Christian or a religious Christian. Salvam suggests that people may fall on a spectrum of religiosity and spirituality, and may manifest qualities of both. Even this description relies on assumptions about what these terms imply, however, with regard to the findings of the present study, this fits with young adults who are mostly of a Christian orientation, and with the descriptions that they provided. While the relationship between the two constructs in the survey descriptions appeared to be that spirituality was the authentic expression of belief and connection to God, religiosity provided the framework, group affiliation, and prescribed practices through which to channel this expression.

11.4. Qualitative Continued: Participants' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Their Faith

The research question: what factors do young adults perceive as influencing their faith development, is similar to the research questions that were addressed more so in the quantitative part of the study, however, the qualitative part of the study meant that the participants could share about the significant factors in their lives that were influential to their faith development. Unlike performing a regression analysis it is nearly impossible in this instance to determine the factors that were the 'strongest predictors' of spirituality and religious commitment. However, it is possible to understand in greater detail the participants' subjective reflections and beliefs about how these factors shaped their faith. A main theme in the interviews was that all of the participants had a strong faith that they had come to own for themselves. It was not dependent on decisions made by their parents or other significant people whom they had been supported by. How did they get to this point?

For most of the participants, although they appeared to have a strong religious or spiritual identity, it was not a solo undertaking. Perhaps the interesting paradox of their faith identities was that whilst they perceived it to be something they owned and had internalised, other people and social networks had been crucial to its development and were also important in forming and sustaining their practices and habits concerning faith. According to the various influences on faith that were talked about in the interviews, there appears to be a bi-directional interchange between individual faith expression and ownership, versus embeddedness in a church community. To what extent would individual faith survive outside of this social embeddedness? It is important to be aware that this is an illogical question in the context of many religions, because by definition they incorporate collective identities (Cohen, Hall, Koenig, & Meador, 2005). However, in modern western Christianity,

considering personal belief and practice to be separate aspects is common (Ammerman, 2013; Cohen, 2002); a reminder of the complexities of defining and distinguishing between spirituality and religiosity.

Modern Christianity is an example of a tradition that is able to consider these two aspects separately and often expects adherents to operate in both realms, whereas for other religious faiths there is no difference between personal belief and corporate practice (Smith, 1979). The sustaining effects of church environments was mentioned or alluded to by many of the interviewees. A curious question for future research is how stable the religious and spiritual identities of the interview participants are outside of a conversation about religion and spirituality, and also, outside of the context of their religious communities. Greater amounts of time spent in other contexts may be experienced as a challenge to faith. Several of the participants mentioned feeling strange in times when church youth group and young adults events were taking a break, a sense of aloneness when they had disagreements with their church friends, and doubt in response to challenging questions from non-religious workmates. Another participant mentioned that university had the potential to be “corrosive” to her faith, and having a Christian group on campus provided support in what she perceived to be a hostile environment. Regular exposure to their Christian networks and church may be necessary to sustain their faith identities, or at least, provide a sense of cohesion in their faith.

The participants understood their faith to be heavily influenced by the people closest to them, and the greatest childhood influence was their parents. The most common idea for this theme was that their parents had chosen their environments, which in turn, had a direct influence on the faith of the interviewees. Nelson (2014) summarised this point by discussing that although parents appear to directly socialise their children’s spirituality and religiosity through discussion and teaching, their influence is also often (and perhaps mostly) indirect, due to the control they have of their children’s environments. This is confirmed by other studies of young adult religiosity (Gunnøe & Moore, 2002; Smith & Snell, 2009). According to Smith and Snell (2009), an important factor which appears to contribute to high levels of religious devotion is the value that parents place on their own religiosity and spirituality, and regular church attendance. It may be that observing parents acting in accordance with their religious values has an impact on faith development, as noted by a few of the interviewees. Many of the other direct influences on faith development that were mentioned by the interviewees are those that their parents had control of, such as their schools, friends from school and church, relationships with other adults, and of course, church.

Church, and the social networks connected to church also had a significant bearing on the faith development of the interviewee participants. Often their most meaningful relationships were with peers and members at their church, including mentors who were instrumental in encouraging their faith. Church was also a place to volunteer and get involved, as some participants were part of a worship band, or helped lead the youth group. The importance of church for faith development amongst the interviewees suggests an inconsistency between the qualitative and quantitative findings. The regression analyses from the survey suggest that the most important factor for high levels of spirituality and religious commitment is to have intrinsic reasons for church attendance, low levels of diffusion and moratorium (in the case of spirituality), whereas the major themes in the interviews were the social influences. This apparent inconsistency cannot be fully resolved by the current study. What can be said is that variables such as “intrinsic reasons for church attendance” are a specific terminology, and that people do not usually discuss their motivations in this way. It is possible that the interviewees discussed aspects of their faith that are more accessible to consciousness, such as their social networks. And whilst the participants did not talk about “intrinsic reasons” the majority of the interviewees communicated that their participation in church was their choice, and many of them spoke about feeling closer to God and experiencing growth in their faith as a result of attending. These would be interpreted as intrinsic reasoning according to my measures and according to Allport (Allport & Ross, 1967). It could further be theorised that since intrinsic motivations are developed over time and considered by Allport to be part of what makes up ‘mature religious sentiment’ (Allport, 1950; Allport & Ross, 1967; Selvam, 2013), this implies a developmental aspect. How might a young person develop intrinsic motivation? Through socialisation with other sincere religious devotees, such as parents, mentors, youth leaders, pastors and religious peers. However, it may be that these influences are more crucial to faith development at a younger age, whilst motivations, which have been learnt from these significant others, including the other factors that the interviewees discussed, provide a more proximal explanation for religiosity and spirituality in young adulthood. It is possible that intrinsic motivation for church attendance may be the most proximal predictor of religiosity and spirituality, however, developing intrinsic motivation may ultimately be a product of other factors. This moves into theoretical territory that cannot be ascertained by the results from the current study.

11.5. Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

This study adds value to this field of research for several reasons. Firstly, I have carefully considered and employed multiple measures for spirituality and religious commitment, rather than using simplistic dichotomies between the institutional and the personal (DeHaan et al., 2011; Good & Willoughby, 2006). Mahoney and Cano (2014) discuss that single-item scales for religiosity/spirituality are not sufficient to measure such multifaceted constructs. As noted by Dehaan et al. (2011), a large majority of research in this field is based on simplistic measures, for example, frequency of church attendance. On the other hand, Gorsuch (1984) proposes that measures which assess self-reported beliefs, values, attitudes and commitments all in the same scale make the assumption that all these items are related to each other. Hence, measures of religiosity are often either too simplistic, or combine too many items as one composite under the assumption that beliefs always translate into values, and that these are proportional to levels of religious attendance and commitment (Gorsuch, 1984).

The measures that were used in the current study are unlikely to provide a perfect solution to this problem, but do have several strengths. First, I have separated out various composites of religiosity and measured associations between them. Second, whilst not only measuring frequency of church attendance, this study employed a measure of reasons for doing so (intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for church attendance), and further, the construct of religious commitment was different from both measures (conceptually, and according to the bivariate associations). This is a meaningful contribution to the field because it addresses multiple perspectives for ways to measure religiosity/spirituality, and has shown that for this population, these various facets are indeed associated with each other, but are also related to different aspects of mental health, and with different psychosocial factors. Further, it addresses intrapsychic and ontogenic predictors of religiosity and spirituality, such as identity and motivations. Such an approach is unique compared with other studies that have focussed primarily on microsystem factors and socialisation influences (Regnerus et al., 2004; Regnerus & Uecker, 2006; Smith et al., 2002).

The lack of religious diversity in this study is both a strength and a limitation. It is a limitation for the reason that the findings of this study cannot be generalised to the majority of young adults in New Zealand. It is only applicable to a religious context (and more specifically, a Christian one). This is also a strength. The participants in this sample represent the higher end of the normal curve for measures of religiosity and spirituality. Hence, with regard to these constructs and the associations with the other variables that were measured, this population is likely to have different characteristics than a sample which incorporates all

levels of religious belief and affiliation. This may cause regression towards the mean (Stigler, 1997). Some researchers have criticised the use of religiosity/spirituality measures in normative populations, by pointing out that they may only function as reverse measures of secularism (Hall et al., 2008). An example of how this is problematic may be seen in Glanzer and colleague's (2014) discussion on the effects of secular tertiary education on young adult religiosity in America. They generalise findings to the population as a whole, concluding that on average, higher education has very little effect on the religiosity of emerging adults. However, they do cite some cases in which the opposite is true for committed religious adherents (Glanzer, Hill, & Ream, 2014). This suggests that a sweeping generalisation of a population which is largely only tacitly religious (Smith & Snell, 2009) will not be able to access what is occurring in populations who fall significantly outside of the average. The present study has been able to do this, and the findings show that for young adults who are more spiritual and religious than the average New Zealand young person, their faith is associated with their mental and emotional well-being.

However, the measurements used in this study were also a limitation. Religiosity was mainly a commitment measure, where the participants were asked to identify the extent to which they considered themselves to be religious, the importance of maintaining their faith, and the extent to which they had made a commitment regarding their faith (Smith & Denton, 2005). A limitation with this measure is that the bivariate correlations suggest that it is not the same construct to the version of 'religiosity' that was described in the qualitative findings. Religious commitment was not significantly associated with any of the social variables, whereas according to the qualitative results, religiosity is considered to be more communal than spirituality. The bivariate correlations suggest that my measure of religious commitment was tapping into something that was not associated with feeling connected to a community, or with having religious family members and friends.

Spirituality was measured as the extent to which participants felt a connection to God or a higher power, practiced personal prayer, found a sense of peace and purpose in their spirituality, and found it to be important in their daily life. Measuring these constructs in this way does indeed make them appear to be different. However, it is conceivable that the terms, "spirituality" and "religion" could be used interchangeably in either measure. For example, someone might feel that maintaining their spirituality is important to them, they might have made a commitment regarding their spirituality. They might derive a sense of purpose from their religiosity and may also feel a connection to God because of their religiosity.

Hence, the measures for spirituality and religiosity in this study may be measuring different aspects of one, broad construct that encompasses both, as put forth by Pargament (1996, 1999b) and others (Hill et al., 2000). Statistical techniques such as confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling would be beneficial to help understand the latent structure amongst the measured variables and the relationships between these constructs (Joshnloo, 2012). Structural models may differ between age groups, cultures and religious affiliations, hence, it would be useful to collect data from multiple populations with larger sample sizes, and compare various structural models in order to better understand the diverse ways that the two constructs are related. While these concepts may seem elusive, it may not be a matter of creating a universal model for spirituality and religion, but rather to understand the different ways in which they are applied cross-culturally (Selvam, 2013).

As discussed above, the quantitative results of the current study provide data on the associations between a variety of interpersonal factors and spirituality/religious commitment in a snapshot of time, while the qualitative interviews have provided themes from autobiographical accounts of spirituality/religion. Taken together, both sets of data suggest factors that are involved in the development of faith and religious behaviour in young people. Oser, Scarlett and Bucher (2006) recommend that a legitimate developmental approach is one that searches out the “antecedents and consequences” of various aspects of faith, such as the content and structure of spirituality and religion, as well as the behaviours that are formed as a result. Further, a developmental approach incorporates the task of understanding the various ways that existential events are interpreted depending on age and stage of life (Oser et al, 2006, p944). Some progress was made in the current study to examine the antecedents and consequences of religiosity/spirituality, however the results are limited by the cross-sectional approach, small sample size and small age-range of the participants.

Fowler’s (1981, 1984) stage model is an example of a developmental approach and one of the more well-known attempts to research religion at a lifespan level. However, perhaps with the diminishing popularity of stage-structural theories (Oser et al, 2006), there is a much larger body of international, cross-sectional, correlational research than there is, longitudinal studies with a developmental perspective. In New Zealand there are even very few cross-sectional studies. The National Study of Youth and Religion (Smith & Denton, 2005, Smith & Snell, 2009) is an example of a longitudinal, nationwide study, which has yielded some enlightening findings on religion in adolescence and emerging adulthood. However, the United States has its own particular religious climate (Stastna, 2013), therefore, it may not be possible to generalise their findings to other western nations. Further, the

authors have designed the study as a sociological enquiry, with socialisation as a primary theory for explaining their findings (Smith & Denton, 2005). As previously discussed, socialisation is likely to be a key factor in faith development, but unlikely to be the only mechanism. Further, as noted by Keller and Strieb (2013) and Fowler himself (1981), Fowler's stages of faith also do not adequately explain the mechanisms behind changes in spirituality and religion, nor many of the specific aspects of form and content which may change or remain constant. More progress might be made if researchers are able to consider a broad range of theoretical orientations which encompass a variety of possibilities, such as socialisation, ecological systems, cognitive, emotional, and moral development, with the aim to study spiritual/religious development from childhood to adulthood. Mixed methods which incorporate in depth, narrative interviews with participants is recommended by Keller and Strieb (2013). It would be beneficial to design a longitudinal study in New Zealand with an exclusive focus on religiosity/spirituality, incorporating a developmental approach and following a single cohort for a number of years.

Future studies need to address spirituality and religion in Māori young people. How do Māori young people understand and practice spirituality and religiosity? To what extent is this influenced by hapu, iwi, and tupuna (ancestors), and to what extent have spiritual identities been adapted to encompass Eurocentric philosophies? Simon was the only interview participant of Māori descent, and one of the few Māori participants who completed the survey. Curiously, whilst he had been exposed to the Rātana faith in childhood, his practice of spirituality was one that he described to be very individual and unrelated to his family, or the religion of his childhood. However, he explained that his ethical values were similar to those of his religious grandmother whom he grew up with. His story of faith development seems to be contrary to the view that indigenous spirituality must be formed within community, however, Simon may also be an example of the influence of 21st century secularism and individualism. To what extent does his spiritual outlook represent those of his peers? Or might it suggest that in the current generation of emerging adults, Māori young people are less likely to derive a congruent identity from their whānau and history, and are more likely to be socialised by their immediate surroundings, such as peers at school, work, university, pop culture, and media?

Finally, an important consideration and limitation of the current study is that identity was only measured in a single domain: spirituality/religiosity. Theorists of identity acknowledge that there are many domains in which people explore their options and make commitments (Kroger, 2003, Marcia, 1966, Adams, 1998). The current study utilised faith

identity variables as predictors of self-rated spirituality and religious commitment. An interesting study venture would be to examine predictors of faith identity. What factors contribute to foreclosure versus moratorium? Do all young people who rate themselves as having an achieved faith identity have memories of a time of moratorium? Schwartz (2001) discussed the theory that moratorium in a given domain may occur when young people perceive a mismatch between their identity and the identities of their closest social networks. This perception of mismatch is said to fuel a search for an identity that fits better. This is consistent with what has been previously discussed regarding stages of faith, and the importance of significant others in the formation of a faith identity. It would be interesting to discover the differences in social environment between the participants who scored highly in faith moratorium compared with those who scored higher in foreclosure or achievement. A further issue that this study has not explored is the possibility of being in different identity status in different domains. It may be that experiencing an identity crisis in the faith domain effects young peoples' commitments in other domains. Earlier research has demonstrated that there are only low associations between identity statuses in different domains, for example, being in diffusion regarding one's political orientation does not entail that an individual will be diffused regarding their occupation. Therefore it makes sense (particularly for adolescents and emerging adults) to measure identity in a variety of domains, and not as a global construct (Goossens, 2001; Grotevant, 1987; Kroger & Haslett, 1991).

11.6. Implications and Conclusion

The implications of this study concern those young adults who are unable to deal with the discomfort that doubting can bring to their spiritual security, and as a result experience lower psychological well-being and higher anxiety. This effect may be exacerbated if they perceive that their community condemns questioning and, thus they cease to seek out social support from members of their church. Studies have found that social support from religious communities is important to the mental health of religiously affiliated young adults (Pearce et al., 2003). Galek et al (2007) discussed that there is a great deal of variability between denominations as to the extent of how much questioning is tolerated. They propose that it may be important for churches to be "conversant with doubt", and to validate intelligent questioning (Galek et al., 2007). Since the findings from this study suggest that questioning faith has an impact on young peoples' spirituality, and on their well-being, churches and youth groups may need to consider whether they foster an environment where young people

feel welcome to ask questions without incurring judgement or ostracism. Young adults need to feel safe to ask questions against a backdrop of social support, hence church leaders and congregants may need to become more open about questions, and more knowledgeable about the sorts of questions that are being asked in order to be able to address them in an adaptive way.

Furthermore, I will make the suggestion that in light of the survey data which suggests the importance of parental and peer relationships to mental health and community connectedness, churches and religious groups who foster relationships and value connectedness are more likely to be successful in creating these safe environments (Whitlock, 2004) where doubts and questions can be explored. In consideration of the ways that the interview participants talked about their churches and in particular, their youth leaders, pastors, priests, and small groups, such relationships seem to be particularly formative for faith development.

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APPENDIX A

Web Link to Information Sheet, Consent Form and Full Questionnaire

http://canterbury.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_3OxTPKW8aKdvyxn

APPENDIX B
Information and Consent Form for Questionnaire

Background

You are invited to take part in a research project examining young peoples' views, values and experiences with faith, religion and spirituality. The aims of this research are: (1) To better understand the faith/spirituality of a group of New Zealand youths (16-21); (2) to examine the contribution of faith/spirituality to well-being. This study is being conducted by Keren Donaldson as part of her Master's thesis in Child and Family Psychology, and will be supervised by Dr Myron Friesen from the School of Educational Studies and Human Development. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, you are free to contact Keren or Myron via the details listed below.

Who can participate in this study?

Young people living in New Zealand, and aged between 16 and 21 years.

What does the study involve?

Participation in the study involves completing an online questionnaire which takes approximately 30 minutes. It asks you a variety of questions about your perceptions of faith/spirituality, the role it has in your life, how important it is in your social circle and family. There are also a few questions that relate to well-being in your relationships, and in the way you feel about yourself. As a 'Thank you' for participating, you will go in a prize draw to win one of nine \$50 iTunes vouchers.

In addition to the questionnaire, a small group of participants will be contacted by Keren to take part in a telephone interview. The questionnaire will give you the option of taking part in the interview, or concluding your participation after doing the questionnaire.

You do not have to go to church or consider yourself religious or spiritual to take part. We are interested in the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of everyone who is willing to participate.

Can I Withdraw My Participation?

Yes, you may withdraw up until the middle of December. After that time we will have pooled together and analysed the data.

Once you fill out the questionnaire, you don't have to consent to the telephone interview. If you do consent to the interview, and you are contacted by Keren, you may still change your mind about whether you participate.

Data Storage

All the information you provide is kept confidential (which means nobody outside the primary researchers will see your individual information). The information from the questionnaires, including the email address that you provide, will be stored in a secure online data-base which can only be accessed by the researchers.

If you participate in the interview, your details will also be kept confidential and within the online data-base.

Are there any risks or benefits to participating?

There are no foreseen physical or psychological risks, and the study has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. If you have questions or concerns about the content of the questionnaires, please feel free to contact the researchers via the details listed below or you may contact the ethics committee directly. Please address concerns to the Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch; email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz.

It is possible that some people may find answering questions about faith and spirituality to be difficult or to arouse emotional distress. If you would like to talk with someone about the topics that are addressed in this questionnaire, please consider the following contacts for support: (1) your parents/caregivers; or another trusted family member (2) a trusted youth leader or mentor; (3) a school/university counsellor; (4) Youthline - free text to 234; phone 0800-37-66-33; email "talk@youthline.co.nz".

Feedback and Results

After we have collected and analysed the data, the results of this study will be published as a master's thesis and as a publication in an academic journal. The thesis can be accessed via

the University library. None of your individual information will be published in the thesis or journal article. Your individual information will always be kept confidential and anonymous. If you have any questions about the study, please contact us via the email addresses provided below.

Persons in Charge:

Dr Myron Friesen, School of Educational Studies, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch. Email: myron.friesen@canterbury.ac.nz

Keren Donaldson, Masters Student, Child and Family Psychology. Email: keren.donaldson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

In order to participate in this study please provide your email address below after reading the following information.

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, which explains this research project and my role as a participant. In particular, I understand that:

- I will be asked to complete an online questionnaire about my perceptions of faith/spirituality, the role it has in my life, my family, and my social circle. I will also answer the questions regarding well-being.
- Participating in this research project is voluntary (my choice).
- I understand that by completing the questionnaire I am giving my consent for the data to be combined with the other participants and published as a master's thesis, and in an academic journal.
- I have the right to stop participating at any time or request that my information be withdrawn from the study before Friday December 19th.
- I understand that my individual data for this research will be stored securely and confidentiality (i.e., no one other than the principal researchers will have access to my individual data), and my personal information will be kept confidential and anonymous in any reports resulting from this research project.
- As a 'Thank you' for my time and participation, I will be entered into a prize draw for one of nine \$50 iTunes vouchers.

Please enter your email address below in order to begin the questionnaire. If you don't want to participate, please close the window.

APPENDIX C
Full Questionnaire

Many of the questions in this survey focus on spirituality, religion and faith. Before getting started, we ask that you write your own brief definitions for what these words mean for you.

Spirituality

Religion/Religiosity

Faith

This first section asks about the role of religion and spirituality in your daily life. Please rate how true or not true each statement is for you. If you do not practice any particular religion or spirituality, or you feel that the statements are not relevant to you, you are welcome to choose the "Not True" option.

(Likert scale displays “Very True” “Often True” “Slightly True” and “Not True”)

My faith shapes my daily life

Attending youth group contributes to my spiritual growth

Attending church contributes to my spiritual growth

Maintaining my faith is important to me

I have made a commitment regarding my faith

I am aware of God's presence in difficult times

Prayer is an important part of my life

My faith helps me to understand life's purpose

I feel close to God

I have had at least one meaningful spiritual experience in the past

People differ in their spiritual beliefs and experiences. Some people consider themselves to be deeply spiritual, but are not affiliated with any church or religious group. Others do not value spirituality at all, whilst many people who are affiliated with a church or religious group also consider themselves to have an active spirituality. Please respond to the following statements according to what seems most true of you at the present

time. If you do not feel that these statements are relevant to you, please choose the "Not True" option.

(Likert scale is the same as above)

I consider myself to be a spiritual person

I feel connected to a higher power/Being/God/transcendent reality/power within myself

Personal prayer and/or meditation is/are an important part of my life

My spirituality helps me cope with stress

My spirituality helps me to understand life's purpose

My spirituality is an important part of my day to day life

My spirituality helps me to experience peace, even when I am going through a difficult time

The next section is about your attendance in religious or Christian services.

I attend Church, Mass, Mosque or Synagogue

- Once a week or more
- Once a fortnight
- At least monthly
- Only occasionally
- Never

I attend Youth Group (or Similar)

- Once a week or more
- Once a fortnight
- At least monthly
- Only occasionally
- Never

People attend Church, Mass, Synagogue or Mosque for a variety of reasons. If you attend a place of worship, please rate each reason according to how true they are for you. If you do not attend, please skip to the next section.

I attend because:

Many of my friends attend
My leaders inspire me
I feel part of something bigger than myself
My leaders are cool
It is important for my spiritual growth
By going, I feel closer to God
I enjoy catching up with people I know
It helps me to not feel alone in my faith
I have service/leadership commitments
It helps with my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures
My parents make me go
By going, I receive guidance for how I should live my life

If there is another reason that has not been covered, please tell us what it is:

If you attend a Youth Group or similar, please rate each of the following reasons according to how true they are for you. If you do not attend, please skip to the next section.

I attend because:

Many of my friends attend
My leaders inspire me
I feel part of something bigger than myself
I feel like I should attend – it's an obligation
My leaders are cool
It is important for my spiritual growth
By going, I feel closer to God
I enjoy catching up with people I know
It helps me to not feel alone in my faith
I have service/leadership commitments
It helps with my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures
My parents make me go

By going, I receive guidance for how I should live my life

If there is another reason that has not been covered, please tell us what it is:

The next section continues along the theme of faith and spirituality. These can be answered even if you do not consider yourself to be spiritual or religious. Please read BOTH parts of each statement, then rate how true of you the statement is.

(Likert scale - not at all true, somewhat true, mostly true, very true)

I've gone through a time of serious questions about my faith, and now I can say that I mostly know what I believe (even if I don't understand everything).

My views about faith/spirituality are very similar to those of my parents/caregivers. I'm not really interested in questioning these views.

I'm not really sure who God is for me. I'd like to make up my mind, but I haven't finished searching yet.

When it comes to matters of faith, I just haven't found anything that appeals to me. I don't really feel the need to look.

I have considered and re-considered what I believe, and now I think I know where I stand with faith and spirituality.

I have explored what I think and believe about religion and spirituality, and have come to the conclusion that it's not for me.

I feel confused about what I believe right now. I keep changing my views about what is right and wrong.

The topics of religion, or faith/spirituality don't interest me. I'm not fussed one way or the other.

My participation/ non-participation in religious or spiritual practices/activities (such as church attendance, prayer, or meditation) are the same as my parents/caregivers. I've never really questioned why.

The next section asks about your family and friends. Please answer according to how true of you each statement is at the present time.

At least one of my parents/caregivers attends church/mass/mosque/synagogue

I would describe at least one of my parents/caregivers as having an active faith/spirituality.

There are several members of my extended family who I would describe as having an active faith/spirituality.

I can talk about religious/spiritual matters with some or all members of my family.

My school encourages faith/spirituality

I have family members who pray for me (privately or with me present)?

A lot of my friends have an active faith/spirituality

My friends don't understand what I'm going through these days

My friends care about how I am feeling

Talking over problems with my friends makes me feel ashamed or foolish

When we discuss things, my friends care about my point of view

I trust my friends

I have friends with whom I can discuss religious or spiritual matters

The next section is about your parents/caregivers. When you encounter the word "mother" please think of the person who has been most like a mother to you. When you encounter the word "father" please think of the person who has been most like a father to you.

(Likert Scale)

My father doesn't understand what I'm going through these days

Talking over problems with my father makes me feel ashamed or foolish

I trust my father

If my father knows something is bothering me he will ask me about it

My father trusts my judgment

I tell my father about my problems and troubles

I feel loved by my father

I feel loved by my mother

My mother trusts my judgment

Talking over problems with my mother makes me feel ashamed or foolish

I trust my mother

I tell my mother about my problems and troubles

If my mother knows something is bothering me she asks me about it

My mother doesn't understand what I'm going through these days

Many young people feel a part of a community that goes beyond their immediate family and peers at school. Your community is a group of people who you see fairly regularly and who you feel that you belong with at this time in your life.

If you are part of a community, which community group do you feel most a part of (check all that apply)?

- Sports Group
- Church
- Youth Group
- Your School
- Your Suburb or Neighbourhood
- None outside of my immediate family
- My Extended Family
- Other (please specify)

In the last section, if you chose the option of "none, outside of my immediate family", please skip this section and move to the next.

This section asks about your experiences with your community. Please rate each statement according to how true of you it is.

(Likert Scale)

I have some close friends within my community

My community makes me feel valued and accepted

There are adults outside of my immediate family who would be willing to help me if I needed it

I don't really feel like I'm a part of my community

My community encourages my faith/spiritual growth

We help each other out.

I trust most of the people in my community

The adults in my community care about what I have to say

It feels as if we all share a common purpose or goal

This is the second last section! Thank you for your participation!

In this part of the questionnaire, we would like to know a little bit about how you feel about life and yourself. Consider only the past two weeks, and answer as accurately as you can.

Please rate each statement according to how true of you it is:

(Likert Scale)

I usually feel positive about who I am

I feel confident about my skills and abilities

I feel positive about the future

I struggle to enjoy life as much as I used to

Once I start worrying, I can't stop

I often think about the meaning of life

I feel that my life has a purpose

I feel sad a lot of the time

I don't tend to worry about things

I feel useless a lot of the time

I cry more often than I used to

I notice that I have been feeling more anxious lately

I like to think about and make plans for the future

I feel capable of achieving my goals

As soon as I finish a task, I start worrying about everything else I have to do

I get a lot of pleasure from the things I enjoy doing

I feel that my life has a purpose

Life feels meaningless

On the whole, I think I am a worthwhile person

Last section!

In this section, we ask you to provide some basic information about yourself. Please remember that this will be kept confidential.

What is your nearest age in years?

- 16

- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Which religious group, church, or spirituality do you belong to?

If you do not belong to any, you are welcome to write "none", or a worldview such as "atheist" or "agnostic" (or any other description you would like to use).

Which ethnic group do you belong to?

Does your mother work in a paid job?

- Yes
- No

What is your mother's occupation?

Does your father work in a paid job?

- Yes
- No

What is your father's occupation?

Which city do you live in?

- Auckland
- Hamilton
- Wellington
- Christchurch
- Nelson
- Dunedin

- Other:

How did you hear about this survey?

- Website
- Facebook
- Saw a flyer/poster
- A youth leader told me about it
- A friend told me about it

Other (Please specify):

You made it to the end! Thank you for your participation.

Your data is now being stored in the system.

The winners of the iTunes vouchers will be drawn at the beginning of November. You will be contacted via email if you are one of them.

Once again, many, many, many thanks!

If you are willing to be contacted about an interview (all interviewees will go in the draw to win a \$50 iTunes voucher, and all will receive a \$10 Warehouse voucher), please click on this link:

http://canterbury.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0xIodkiGvvpB1Zz

Otherwise, you may exit this window, and you're done!

APPENDIX D
Link to Study Website

www.ifaithstudy.wordpress.com



APPENDIX E
Interview Consent Form

Hello! Thank you for being willing to participate in a telephone interview. Remember that your information will be kept confidential. Please note that the researchers require only a small number of participants, therefore it is possible that you will not be contacted. However, your willingness to participate is a great help to this project.

By providing your details, you are giving your consent to be contacted about an interview. It is your choice whether you participate or not, therefore, if you are contacted for an interview you may decline participation.

Everyone who participates in the interview will receive a \$10 Warehouse voucher, and will go in the draw to win a \$50 iTunes voucher.

Please provide the required details below.

Your first name:

Your landline or cellphone number:

Your email address:

With their permission, please provide the email address of a parent/caregiver (if under 18)

APPENDIX F

Before Interview Introduction and Ethical Practice (Verbal)

This interview is confidential and anonymous, which means that anything you say will not go beyond this conversation. In my thesis, no identifying information will be published, and I will use a pseudonym. You are welcome to skip any question that you do not wish to answer. You are also able to terminate the interview at any time with no questions asked.

Are you in a comfortable, place where you are free to talk? Are you comfortable if I record this conversation?

Finally, please feel free to express your ideas honestly. There are no right or wrong answers, and I have no preconceived ideas about what you should say. The purpose of this interview is to find out about your ideas and experiences.

APPENDIX G
Interview Schedule

Family spirituality

How would you describe the spirituality or religion of your parents and family? How similar or different is your spirituality?

How do you feel that your parents have influenced the development of your faith?

Are there other family members or mentors who have influenced your faith? In what ways have they done so?

Church/Youth group

Where does church or youth group fit into your spiritual life? What is your role there?

What helps you to feel connected or welcome there? What prevents you from feeling connected or welcome?

Would you like to attend more/less often? What would prevent you from doing so?

Meanings of faith/spirituality

Would you describe yourself as spiritual?

What does that mean for you?

Would you describe yourself as religious?

What does that mean for you?

What does faith mean to you?

Who is God? What's God like?

If a person who was not a Christian asked about your faith, what would you tell them?

Personal importance/relevance

How important is your faith/spirituality in your life?

Why is it important (or not important)?

What do you feel is/are the purpose/s of your life?

In your opinion, what is your faith all about? What parts are most meaningful to you?

Why are they so meaningful?

Personal practice

How do you personally maintain your faith/spirituality? Are there any particular activities?

What do you do that helps you to feel closer to God?

What spiritual truths or aspects of your faith/spirituality have most impacted the way you live?

Personal experience & stories of faith

What experiences have helped to shape your faith/spirituality?

Have you ever had a memorable spiritual experience? Can you tell me about it?

How has this experience impacted your faith and/or your life?

Have you ever questioned or been through a period of questioning about your faith/spirituality?

What kinds of questions have you asked?

Do you feel that they are resolved?

How close do you feel to God? Does this feeling change much?

How has your faith/spirituality changed from when you were younger?

Has your faith/spirituality changed within the past year? How has it changed?

Can you imagine your faith – or some aspect of it – changing in the future? (Which aspects?)

Map of Themes

Internalised Faith

Importance of faith:

Personal search:

Experience of God

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Mentors
- Church leaders
- Church small group
- Worship band
- Peers

Church:

Terminology and Talking about it:

- More spiritual than parents
- Happy with being religious
- Spiritual = internal
- Ambiguous about terms
- Be relevant when talking to others about faith